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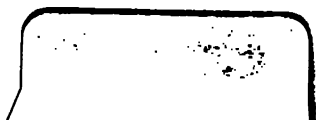
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LIONEL DEERHURST.

VOL. I.





LIONEL DEERHURST

OR,

FASHIONABLE LIFE

UNDER THE REGENCY.

EDITED

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE DEERHURSTS.

CHAPTER I.

My father was the son of Sir Roger Deerhurst, a descendant of the Coventry family, who with other young adventurers had accompanied Mr. Clive to India, and during the seven years' war had distinguished himself by his gallantry, knowledge of the oriental languages, and a prudence and self-possession, where interest prevailed, more to be envied than admired in one so young.

At Arania he fought by the side of Mr. Clive, and being the means of preserving that brave Commander's life, was not only presented with a company, but appointed to a place of high trust on the Coromandel coast. There he was soon after united to the orphan heiress of one of

the Carnatic nabobs who had perished in Madras in 1746, when it was besieged by the French. With her Sir Roger gained vast wealth and a splendid residence near Pondicherry. It was said, that not satisfied with these unexpected acquisitions, he not only encouraged, but took part in the barbarous persecutions against the hapless Gentoos, for the purpose of extorting their treasures. For the truth of these reports I cannot vouch, but alas! from earliest youth, I had too much cause to understand his stern, unrelenting temper.

Of Sir Roger's union with the Carnatic heiress, my father Lionel was the only fruit; and as at the age of twelve he appeared delicate, *malgré* the bitter grief of parting from her beloved boy, Lady Deerhurst consented to have him educated in England, hoping that its genial clime would restore his waning strength. Thither Sir Roger accompanied him, placed him at Eton, enjoining that he should be gratified in every whim and caprice his childish fancy might dictate; and then bidding him a fond adieu, returned to India.

Profiting by the indulgence so weakly granted, Lionel, as might be expected became more remarkable for fun and frolic, than attention to study. His cheerful temper, buoyant spirits, and unbounded generosity gained for him the friend-

ship of his companions ; and when at eighteen he left Eton to join the — light infantry, in which he was appointed to an ensigncy, he bore away with him the sincere regrets of the whole college ; for even the tutors, however they might condemn his idleness, were by no means proof against the influence of his ingenuous and liberal disposition.

In the light infantry he lost none of his Etonian popularity ; his introduction as Sir Roger's heir was favourable ; then he was abundantly supplied with money, kept a noble stud, both at the command of his friends, which included all his brother officers, nay acquaintances ; to these extraneous advantages, he united a ready playful wit, a fine voice, and was confiding and extravagant to imprudence. No wonder that Lionel Deerhurst was popular. In placing his son in the light infantry, Sir Roger merely intended it as a sort of noviciate in the service, as he himself proposed returning to England, and having him transferred into the Life Guards, which his great interest could easily effect. Besides, he had it in contemplation to reside a few years in Devonshire, where he inherited an ancient though dilapidated estate from his ancestor, the first baronet of his race ; but ere these plans were put into execution, the unexpected

acquirements, to throw into the shade the unhappy circumstances of their birth. It had been his intention to have given them large fortunes, and to have introduced them into those high circles in which he himself moved; but in the midst of these schemes for their aggrandizement he was carried off suddenly and intestate, while his lovely and accomplished daughters were plunged into the extremest destitution. A distant relative succeeded to the title and estates, who far from extending to them any protection, openly maintained the propriety of discountenancing the offspring of the late Lord's profligacy. Thus, owing to the selfish thoughtlessness of their father, were they obliged to seek an anxious and precarious livelihood in the practice of accomplishments cultivated with a widely different view, till they were relieved from that painful necessity by the union of the eldest with Mr. Arnheim, whose mental superiority compensated for his want of youth and more exalted station.

Had Gertrude Vilmont been less beautiful or fascinating, her misfortunes and dependance had proved sufficient to attach her to Lionel, then glowing with all the romance of youth and inexperience.

The particulars of my father's courtship I never learned; his passion for Gertrude was so violent, that he would have sacrificed every con-

sideration to its indulgence ; but in his mistaken view of Sir Roger's character he anticipated no obstacle to his wishes. From childhood, his every whim and caprice were wont to be gratified, and the idea of being thwarted in the lightest fancy never occurred to him.

Too impatient to wait, during the tedious months which must elapse ere he received his father's sanction from Pondicherry, he urged his beautiful Gertrude to an immediate union. Fondly devoted to her ardent, impassioned lover, "she nothing lothe," consented, and notwithstanding the objections put forward by Mr. Arnheim, the enamoured lovers were ultimately united by him in the parish church of Plinlimmon.

A year passed off happily, during which time, under various pretexts, Lionel postponed announcing his nuptials to Sir Roger ; and as Gertrude's figure, albeit her blushes, held out a fair prospect of her soon becoming a mother, confident as he was, he began to fear that he had been too precipitate, and that Sir Roger might take umbrage at a step, which he even to himself acknowledged to be thoughtless ; for while Gertrude's love daily increased, his declined in an equal proportion ; and this feeling of discontent was kept up, and aggravated by the frequent visits which he made to his corps, still at

Chester, where his return was ever hailed with pleasure, as being the best and jolliest fellow at the mess.

Thus months rolled on imperceptibly, when Lionel was roused from his reckless indifference, by receiving a letter, announcing at once his father's arrival in England, and his own appointment to a company in the —— light infantry, and also requesting that he would lose no time in joining Sir Roger in London. In compliance with this request, Lionel hastened to meet that parent from whom he had been so long separated, and of whom he had formed so erroneous an opinion; while as the event proved, Sir Roger was equally mistaken in the view which he had formed of his son.

This interview, the exact particulars of which I have never learned, proved fatal to my father's prospects; nor were the circumstances under which it occurred, such as to lead to favourable results. They met under a restraint; both had a painful duty to perform—a secret to disclose, of the reception of which by the other, each was dubious. Lionel had to announce to his haughty and imperious father his union with the penniless offspring of shame; while Sir Roger had to apprise his sarcastic and volatile son of his approaching marriage, with one young enough to

be his daughter; for the business which had brought him so unexpectedly to Europe, was to make some arrangements preparatory to his nuptials with the lovely daughter of Admiral Eustace. Besides, Sir Roger was disappointed, cold, proud, and pompous, a lover of forms, and of the old regime; he was offended, nay often shocked at the bold, reckless, dissipated character of his son.

A deficiency of moral excellence he would have overlooked as a matter of indifference; but Lionel's swearing and drinking, his noisy and pointed sarcasms, while they were repugnant to the Eastern Nabob's refinement, constantly wounded his self-love; and far from finding pleasure in the society of an only son, from whom he had been so long parted, he felt ill at ease in his company, and was relieved by his absence.

With such sentiments, he received with pleasure the intelligence that Lionel must proceed to St. Domingo with his regiment. Nor was this change in his movements displeasing to the latter, as it placed it out of his power to postpone any longer that disclosure from which the stern, ungracious manner of Sir Roger, had hitherto deterred him. He was, indeed, conscious that he had made but little progress in Sir Roger's affections, as in one of his letters to my mother at this period, he writes thus:—

Lionel Deerhurst. He arose, next morning ; yet oh ! how different. But yesterday, the expectant heir of thousands, the favoured child of fortune, the son whose every wish was no sooner uttered than gratified ; to-day, disinherited, bearing about him the intolerable burthen of a father's wrath—the wretched victim of weakness and intoxication.

As he sat striving to remove the weight upon his heart, by indulging in sanguine hopes of Sir Roger's relenting, the illusion was at once and for ever dispelled by receiving a letter, reiterating all that the exasperated father had uttered the night before, announcing his fixed resolution to disinherit him, and peremptorily banishing him for ever from his presence. At the same time he received from his agent the intelligence, that a small annuity had been settled upon him, beyond which, he need not look to Sir Roger Deerhurst for countenance or support.

The effect of this intelligence upon Lionel was other than might be expected. Conscience, that busy tormentor, was soothed and set at rest ; indignation at his father's unnatural sternness and injustice took the place of remorse at his own folly. Pride, the pride of one, before unthwarted in his slightest wish, banished from his breast every thought of seeking a reconciliation ; and

dejected, not humbled, he hurried down to Plinlimmon to take a hasty leave of the loved cause of all his misery.

It was in vain my mother importuned to accompany him to St. Domingo. The arguments of Lionel, Mr. Arnheim, and her devoted sister, overpowered her entreaties; and with a bursting heart, she saw my father depart to drown the memory of his ruined fortunes in the wild excesses of tropical dissipation. The shock of his departure, and grief at their altered prospects, were the occasion of my unexpected appearance under such gloomy auspices; a mother's tears were mingled with my infant nutriment, and the first sounds that broke upon my ears, were the heart-broken sighs of the forlorn wife.

CHAPTER II.

EARLY in the spring of 1782, my father again visited Cader Idris, after an absence of nine years, an interval which I pass rapidly over, as generally unmarked by any incident of importance. Two events had, indeed, occurred which exerted a powerful influence over the interests of our family. Immediately on his return to India, after the unhappy rupture with his son, Sir Roger Deerhurst's nuptials with Miss Eustace were celebrated. The Madras Gazette, in which the intelligence reached England, entered into an elaborate description of the gorgeous *trousseau* of the bride, and the magnificent preparations made at the palace of Pondicherry for her reception. All this had sunk deeply into my father's breast, and seemed to shut out all prospect of reconciliation with his unrelenting parent.

The other circumstance which I have to mention, though of a widely different character,

exercised a still greater influence upon my destiny. It was the birth of Clara Arnheim. This event was as joyful as unexpected, since many years had elapsed from Mrs. Arnheim's marriage, ere she was blessed with this new claim upon her affections. All seemed to participate in the pleasure afforded by the appearance of the little stranger. Lord Plinlimmon acted as godfather; her Ladyship insisted on supplying the tiny wardrobe; in a word, the Parsonage was one scene of joy and congratulation. All this operated powerfully on my boyish fancy, and the earliest sentiment of which I can recal the memory, was that of love for my baby-cousin. Oh! that I could bring back those hours of innocence in which I used to rock the lovely child in her downy cradle, fondly sport with her, as she rolled upon her mother's lap, or hold her on my mountain pony; while Llewellyn (Llewellyn was my nurse's son) used to stand at its head. But why loiter over scenes never to be recalled, the bare memory of which fills my saddened soul with anguish?

My father's return to Cader Idris had been occasioned by his promotion to a majority in the — foot, and as his regiment was under orders for embarkation, his arrival was the signal for my mother's departure and mine; a parting, the

anguish of which is still fresh in my memory. To be brief, soon after our arrival at Gibraltar, my mother's health rapidly declined; and notwithstanding the genial air of the south, she fell a prey to hereditary consumption. This sad event was accelerated by the intelligence that her beloved and only sister, Mrs. Arnheim, had expired in giving birth to a still-born child.

After an absence of some years in the south of Spain, my father and I arrived in England, and without further delay hastened to the Parsonage. Oh! never shall I forget my youthful ecstasies as I caught the first glimpse of the cherished scenes of my childhood.

The manse was erected at the extreme end of a small thickly wooded dingle at the base of Cader Idris, whose craggy heights formed a gigantic bulwark to protect it from the frequent storms which blew over the long range of mountains, extending from the sea-coast to Plinlimmon. A clear trout-stream, which borrowed its silvery waters from the Diswyney, ran bubbling on, and the more distant but imposing view of Lord Plinlimmon's ancient castle, with its fine parks, and extensive woods, a residence worthy of its noble proprietor, are the features of the landscape most prominent in my memory. Amid objects so magnificent and imposing, few would have passed

to gaze on the pastor's modest glebe of unhewn stone, built in the simplest style of architecture. The only attempt at ornament consisted of a verandah surrounded by, and supporting a variety of exquisite plants, whose gay blossoms gave a graceful and cheerful appearance to the otherwise sombre building; besides at either side of the front entrance were stages of rare exotics—Clara's peculiar charge.

While I hurry on to the stirring incidents of my life, let me dwell on the days of happiness passed with Clara Arnheim. Our numerous excursions up the hoary sides of that old mountain where we used to wander for hours and hours, in all the dreamy rapture of first, of boyish love, free from the slightest taint of selfishness or sense; not a dell, not a lake of that strange mountain did we leave unvisited. And oft used we to wile away those blissful hours in telling curious legends of the holy Druids, who offered up their strange and horrid vows within the huge circles that seemed of nature's workmanship, and with which old Cader Idris abounds; or tired of that, used to draw forth the echoes of the mountain with my bugle, the sounds of which revelling through all the cliffs and fissures of the rock, were told back a thousand fold, and soothed, while they amazed, the youthful Clara.

Where now is that fair girl, just emerging from the joy of childhood ; those cheeks of velvet softness, are they to tingle with the blush of shame ; those eyes of intense azure, are they to scald with tears of hopeless misery ; those silken sunny locks, to hide the heavings of a bursting heart ? Can the destroyer find aught to work upon 'mid such sweet innocence ? Out upon these thoughts, they drive me to despair.

Two years flew rapidly by — oh ! how rapidly, and we were entering on the third ; another happy year, when I was summoned to join my father, who had been for some time with his regiment in Cork. Arrived there, I was placed under the charge of a Mr. La Franck, an accomplished scholar, and friend of Mr. Arnheim. There I contracted an intimacy with my preceptor's son, Thomas La Franck, and with his pupils, Charles Mellish and George Tennant. The whole attention of our worthy tutor was devoted to our instruction ; and as we were each without brothers, we soon became linked to one another in the closest friendship. La Franck and Tennant were studious ; Mellish and myself, idle : thus in the mornings, we paired off, while in the evenings, we were rarely found apart. Our chief amusement was rowing on the Lee in a boat placed at our disposal by Tennant's father, who

was a considerable ship builder; and my proficiency in music, thanks to my long residence in the south, proved no slight acquisition on such occasions.

To my skill in music I owed many an agreeable acquaintance; but none whom I valued more than Mr. Tennant, my schoolfellow's father. In music he excelled, and being pleased with my proficiency, I became a constant visitor at his house, situated on Glanmire water. How many happy days have I passed under that hospitable roof! How well I can recal to mind its gentle and amiable mistress, and oh! how vividly are my recollections of her daughter, Aigline Tennant, then beaming with youth and innocence; so joyous, so mirthful, and yet so sylph-like, as to seem formed of some finer element than the gross earth.

CHAPTER III.

I PASSED four years of boyish indifference and enjoyment in Cork, unmarked by any event of interest. The warmest friendship subsisted between the four *élèves* of Mr. La Franck; and I passed all my vacations and holidays with the Tennants. My strong, though childish, passion for Clara prevented any warmer feeling than affection springing up between Aigline and myself; and I listened without jealousy to Mellish, as he poured into my ear the confession of his boyish love for her.

In the wayward course of a soldier's life, my father was now obliged to proceed with the regiment to Barbadoes; and fearful of the consequence of a tropical climate on my yet unformed constitution, he resolved to send me back to Cader Idris to continue under Mr. Arnheim's care, till an opportunity offered of procuring me a com-

mission for the army, which was my ultimate destination. The journey from Cork to Cader Idris, was tedious, embittered by my regrets at leaving my friends the Tennants, which even the joyful anticipation of again seeing Clara Arnheim could not altogether assuage.

At length arrived, I alighted at the rustic gate, and entered into the small lawn, adorned by its knots of flowers and shrubs. The harvest moon, in the full refulgence of its glory, shed its softened light around, leaving the craggy heights of Cader Idris in partial shadow. The transparent stream which rushed sparkling by, and which, as Clara used sportively to remark, seemed only to diverge from its parent river to enliven the scene; the rich balmy air, redolent with the perfume of a thousand heaths and flowers, the last vespers of the birds, and oh! far beyond all in loveliness, the tall graceful form of Clara in her drapery of white, standing in the parterre collecting blossoms, which on seeing us, she cast away to bound into my father's arms, then into mine. Oh! it was a moment of rapture, that seemed a foretaste of heaven. But, alas! a gloom overhung the once cheerful Parsonage in consequence of the feeble state of Mr. Arnheim's health, who was threatened with the greatest of human privations, the loss of sight; and even his Christian

piety could not altogether prevent the effect of this calamity weighing on his spirits.

Never did Clara appear to greater advantage than now, as angel like she ministered to her father's wants, reading and writing for him daily. The whole care of the domestic arrangements devolved on the gentle girl, in which task, however, she was much assisted by the activity of a young Welsh girl, Janet Owen, whose attachment and fidelity to Clara made me regard her with interest. Mr. Arnheim, perhaps, apprehensive of the affections of his daughter becoming engaged to one whose close connexion rendered such a result most undesirable, now exerted himself to get me into the army, and at length succeeded in a manner he had least anticipated. His intimate friend and patron was Lord Plinlimmon, who having held a high official position in India, had there become acquainted with my inflexible grandfather. Through this favourable channel, intelligence was conveyed to Sir Roger of my position, and extorted from him that, which under other circumstances, I would have rejected with scorn, an order on his agent in London for one thousand pounds. Thus it was the haughty Nabob dealt out his churl's pittance to the heir of his first-born, while with all the weakness of a dotard father, he lavished on the

offspring of his second marriage every indulgence. My father's half brother, Etienne Deerhurst, was now openly recognised as the expectant heir of all Sir Roger's treasures; and in the bitterness of my heart, I could hardly refrain from venting curses on this odious supplanter—for as such I regarded him.

On receiving Sir Roger's gift, Mrs. Arnheim proposed my immediately proceeding to London; and on the eve of my departure presented me with a valuable watch and some books, advising me by all means to cultivate my musical talents, as they would prove a resource to keep me from dissipation. Clara, too, collected her treasures, to present as parting remembrances, permitting me to cut off a ringlet of her bright hair; and when in the anguish of my burning soul, tortured by the conviction that the Parsonage was no longer to be my home—my blissful home—I bitterly accused her of not regretting me, sweetly, caressingly, the gentle girl said: "Freville, though you say it, you cannot believe that I do not deeply regret you, my earliest companion, my cousin, and my friend." Oh, how calm and passionless did these words appear to my almost frantic feelings! and when, on the following morning, the hour of separation was announced, and that she threw her arms around me, sobbing out,

“Dear, dear, Freville! adieu—farewell!” I lost all control, and clasped her with transport to my wildly throbbing breast; then, overcome by emotions, uttered a groan, reeled, and must have fallen, had not Mr. Arnheim sprang forward, and supporting me in his arms, placed me in the chariot. Ere I recovered from my insensibility, the heights of Cader Idris—that memory-mark of many an hour of happiness—were only visible in the distance.

CHAPTER IV.

My first care on reaching London, was to inquire after Sir Roger's English agent, Mr. Moneymore, on whom my draft for a thousand pounds was drawn, and who I expected would interest himself in the purchase of my commission. As to Mr. Arnheim, he was totally unacquainted with the details of business ; and my noble friend and patron Lord Plinlimmon had departed for Florence to join his lady.

I experienced disappointment on finding that Mr. Moneymore had left town, and was not expected to return for some months. I lost no time in acquainting Mr. Arnheim of his absence, entertaining a wish that he would invite me to return to Cader Idris ; far from it, within a few days I received his answer, which breathed the spirit of paternal love. He said that he deeply regretted being by circumstances prevented from requesting

me once more to make the Parsonage my home ; but that his health declined so rapidly, his physician pressed the necessity of change of air, and he only waited until he could prevail upon some clergyman to perform the duties of his parish, when with Clara and Janet Owen, he would proceed to Swansea. He added,

“ I leave this in the vain pursuit of health, to satisfy, or rather divert, the tender solicitude of my beloved Clara ;—her *young hopes* are sanguine of my recovery ; but, Freville, I am not self-deceived, and feel that I am rapidly approaching man’s final bourne.”

This letter afflicted me, for I experienced a filial affection for Mr. Arnheim ; but at the period, my hopes, too, were young, and I satisfied myself that his apprehensions of immediate death were hypochondriacal.

The next two months were passed by me in lion hunting ; and as this method of killing time is in London a very expensive mode of idling, my finances, never very flush, were reduced so quickly, that notwithstanding my disinclination to move, I was obliged to decamp from my apartments in Sloane Square, and mount into a dingy garret in Oxford Street. All this time I had not heard of the Arnheims ; they had either forgotten my existence, or neglected me ; I had then no other friends

but the Tennants, and they had become as a memory of boyhood ;—but young Hope was still mine, and unappalled by my friendliness or poverty, she flitted around my path, gently leading me to despise the present, in planning for the future. Love and Clara,—for in my bosom they had merged into one,—hovered over my pillow, soothing not disturbing my slumbers ; then came less exciting pleasures, in the form of gold epaulets, flashing swords, waving plumes ; in short, the whole paraphernalia of military and aid-de-camp finery spread their gaud before me ; and then, my extraordinary merits must of necessity crown me with a hero's wreath of victory ! Well, these day dreams are the sweet blossoms of youth and inexperience,—pity that they soon wither before the storms of life ; for me these rainbow colours suspended in ethers far above earth's grovelling atmosphere, began to pale before the grim countenance and discontented murmurings of my most puissant hostess of mount garret. For the last few weeks she had pointedly animadverted on the largeness of my appetite ; I should restrain it, she advised, for it led to consumption. The laugh with which I received this startling intelligence offended the dignity of this dame of Oxford Street, and with

thin footman, as elevating his glass, he lisped out :

“There is some mistake here. Fellow, what do you want?”

This rather confounded me, and in a hesitating voice, I said, “If this is Mr. Moneymore’s residence, and he is at home, be so kind as to acquaint him, that by an order from Sir Roger Deerhurst, I have called upon him.”

“And who are you?” sneered the footman, “to give me this trouble? Fellow, go to Mark Lane office:” and he opened the door.

My anger was raised,—pushing him aside, I called out, “I am Mr. Deerhurst, quick! how dare you loiter?”

My name, added to my decided manner, acted like electricity on the servile menials: the fat porter deferentially handed me a chair; the thin footman skipped up stairs—how I envied him the loose green velvet breeches, which admitted such freedom of limb!—the next moment he returned, and with the skip and grin of a monkey requested I would go to the saloon, where Mr. Moneymore would attend me.

I mounted the marble staircase cautiously.

“Mr. Deerhurst, I fear you have hurt yourself?” said the obsequious footman.

“Not so!” I replied, “but as you may observe,

I wear *tights*," and I burst forth into a fit of laughter, at the look of scorn he cast on my dress as he flung open the door of the gorgeous saloon fitted up in Eastern fashion. Several of the superb ornaments bore our family crest, from which I concluded they were presents from Sir Roger.

In a few moments Mr. Moneymore entered : he was very tall, perruqued, frilled, perfumed, the very personification of conceit. You felt at one look that he was vulgar and affected. He advanced towards me with a sliding step, a simpering air, and his long back bending forward into a curve. Reaching out his hand, he cried :—

"Mr. Deerhurst, most welcome; from my valued friend and noble patron Sir Roger Deerhurst's letter, I was not prepared for so early a visit; but, of course, you understand, that during your sojourn in London this house and all within it are at your command: that is, if such poor accommodations as it offers are worthy of the honour of your presence."

With difficulty I restrained my laughter, as I recollected my sordid garret in Oxford Street. Without accepting the offer, I made an appropriate answer, much wondering at the motive which led to Mr. Moneymore's flattering reception. There was a silence, during which I ob-

served that he attentively scanned my appearance. He interrupted my ruminations, saying :—

“Yes, Mr. Deerhurst, you have a resemblance, though not a very strong one, to my esteemed friend and generous patron, Sir Roger.”

“To that, then,” I cried, “I am to impute your hospitality ; still I must apologise for pressing on your notice the motive of my visit. Perhaps at present it may not suit your convenience, but circumstances have brought me to such a position, that I fear I must trespass on you for an immediate attention to Sir Roger’s order.” I spoke these words in a hesitating tone.

“I do not, Mr. Deerhurst, perfectly comprehend you,” said he ; “your words are incoherent, and you speak doubtingly of accepting my hospitality. Sir, my father, and, consequently, myself, owe our prosperity to Sir Roger, my esteemed friend and noble patron. Mr. Deerhurst, none but fools are ungrateful ; but sit down, I shall presently show you Sir Roger’s letter, announcing that you were to visit me. First I must order preparations for your reception. We bachelors,” and he gave a smirk of self-satisfaction, “are sometimes at fault ; but ha !” and he jumped with a theatrical air, “what am I about ? Now that I hear my chariot, I recollect that when you were announced I was engaged

at my toilette, being invited to dine with Lord Beletrieve. No small honour, my young friend—for such as me,”—and he gave me a sentimental squeeze of the hand, “for his Lordship, the most fastidious nobleman in England, admits none to his table but the *élite*; his mansion is the very emporium of grace, fashion, and luxury.”

“Let me intreat of you, Mr. Moneymore, to keep your engagement. I can attend you to-morrow.”

“*Mon dieu!* Mr. Deerhurst, you attend me? keep my engagement? and leave you? impossible! But excuse me while I write an apology.”

As he wrote, I surveyed him with a strong inclination to laugh in his face; he wore a flowing peruke of a strange fashion, but bearing some resemblance to those I had seen in the pictures of Sir Peter Lely. Between it and his immense roll of cravat stuck out his long hatchet-shaped visage; and, if my nankeens were tight, his fell like bags over his fleshless calves; his vest was of white satin, and his coat of the finest material, but all so elaborate, so studied, he was such a caricature, that I inwardly vowed to renounce foppery, and leave its details to footmen and *parvenus*. As these observations flashed through my mind, I felt well contented with my seedy

garments, rather considering them as a gentlemanly distinction.

Having despatched his answer to Lord Beltrieve, he took a seat next to me, and then, solicitous to impress me with an idea of his consequence, all evidently depending on his acquaintance with the *great*, burst forth into a history of their politics, habits, talents, vices, the latter of which seemed to have fascinated him. Positively he had the whole peerage by heart. As to his words, they rushed forth with the force of a mill-stream, and under the appearance of refinement and affectation, he was painfully gross. Before two hours had passed I detested the fop; still he was amusing.

Taking advantage of a pause in his conversation, I said: — “Excuse me, Mr. Moneymore, but amidst all the nobles and high dames of whom you have spoken—not, I must say, that you have by your revelations elevated that distinguished class to my view—how comes it that you make no mention of Lord Plinlimmon? I understood that he was one of the most distinguished noblemen in England, not only by position and superior talents, but for strict morality.”

“Strict morality!” he reiterated, with a sneer; “pshaw! but you are a youth totally unacquainted with life.”

"Then," I exclaimed in a tone of vivacity expressive of mortification and surprise, "you do not consider Lord Plinlimmon a strictly moral man, or one of superior intellect?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Deerhurst, but positively you misunderstand my meaning: undoubtedly Lord Plinlimmon is one of the very best men in England, a beau-ideal of nobility that would have satisfied La Fayette, or any other romancer of the French revolutionists, a saint that would have been canonized in former ages; but, Mr. Deerhurst, all these sublime qualities are very well in the perspective—to be looked forward to as gracing the residue of life, when the passions are cooled, and the effects of time stealing over our personal attractions," and he cast a look of self-complacency over his figure; "but in youth, Mr. Deerhurst, fashion—mysterious, omnipotent fashion, should be the high mark of our ambition." As he spoke, there was such an air of apish vanity and self-conceit about him, that I felt a violent inclination to knock him down. Without waiting for an answer, he continued: "Of course, as it is Sir Roger's wish, you can call upon Lord Plinlimmon; but, Mr. Deerhurst, humble as I am, I flatter myself that through my means you may be introduced into the Beletrieve set; indeed, immediately upon receiving Sir Roger's letter, I mentioned to my noble and

honoured patron, Lord Beletrieve, that I should request that favour, and he has kindly consented."

I coloured with vexation, at the idea of being received into society through Mr. Moneymore's intercession, and, with great *hauteur* answered :

"If it is, indeed, Sir Roger's wish to have me introduced to Court—though I must say I am at a loss to understand this sudden change of measures—I have no doubt that Lord Plinlimmon, from the friendship he has always shown, will gladly pay me every attention."

He interrupted me quickly, saying :

"Then you know his Lordship?"

"Intimately," I replied.

He looked thoughtful ; then, as if speaking to himself, muttered :

"I had no idea his Lordship had travelled so far."

I made no reply ; when, glancing his eyes over my dress, he said :

"It is just as I thought. His Lordship knows nothing of dress, but considers all these requisite elegancies as minor considerations :—a great mistake ; but the wisest men sometimes err. Appearances are always imposing : what imposes on the senses, influences the mind ; every thing proves this to a demonstration. No arguing against admitted facts ; true, the innovations of

the French Revolution have caused some dilapidation to the ancient fabric of our habits, and customs ; shorn fashion of some of her beams ; but the foundation is unsapped : the goose may be plucked of its feathers, but they grow again."

The laughter I had so long restrained, now burst forth ; and, I fear, somewhat rudely, for Mr. Moneymore looked very angry, as he petulantly said :

" Mr. Deerhurst, Sir Roger having deigned to place you under my peculiar care, in pity to your youth, and depending on your honour not to repeat any information that I may give you, more particularly to Lord Plinlimmon, who considers a too great attention to trifles contemptible, I shall relate a few facts to prove the influence—it may be the caprice of fashion ; first assuring you, that I am not one of the Cosmopolite Club, though his Lordship has graciously said, that except for the prejudices of his set, who banish all who are useful from the high temple of their goddess, I might aspire to the honour."

He paused, and looked at me with his smirk of self-conceit.

I coolly answered : " Mr. Moneymore, being totally ignorant of your subject and allusions, I am incompetent to answer. The name of Plinlimmon as connected with all that is great and good, has long been familiar to my mind ;

with that Beletrieve, I am totally unacquainted, and never before heard of the Cosmopolite Club."

"Tell it not in London!" he exclaimed, in a theatrical tone, "it would at once mark you as a person unacquainted with high life, as one who had either lived in seclusion—a seclusion which excluded all the fashionable news of the day, or, worse again, as having mixed with a very low set; and, in either case, you would never be admitted into the Beletrieve Club."

Again I laughed, for the grimaces and emphasis of the man were quite apish; recovering myself, I replied:

"Then, Mr. Moneymore, you must class me with the secluded. I have no acquaintances in London; how could I?"

"True," he answered, "you are a stranger, even to our customs, and habits, and style of dress," and he scanned the old military surcoat, and the Hessian boots, with a look of ineffable contempt. I made no reply, and he continued: "Mr. Deerhurst, the facts I am going to confide to your honour, and which you may consider as a preface to the volume of instructions I shall consider it my duty to give, before your introduction to Lord Beletrieve:—'that mould of form, and that glass of fashion,'—are such as to the uninitiated must appear absurd, still they go to prove that fashion

depends upon no tangible cause. It is not youth, for Lord Beletrieve is sixty; it is not beauty, for his Lordship, once so pre-eminent, is on the wane; nay, one might possess the form of an Apollo, and the head of an Antinous, and not be the fashion. Again, it is not wealth, for his Lordship's fortune is now limited; in short, it is a *je ne sais quoi* which defies accurate description."

"Forgive me," said I, "for interrupting you; but I thought you were going to relate some important facts which would prove the influence of Lord Beletrieve."

"Important!" he replied, emphatically, "the word appears misapplied; important!—it seems merely applicable to business: it is important to a man to look after his property, after his family, after his health; but what have these to say to fashion? Well, Mr. Deerhurst, perhaps you are right; for, after all, whatever holds an influence over society, is of importance; and a power may be rendered still more potent by being invisible, its mystification possesses one advantage—it cannot be analysed by the vulgar."

Sick of his rhodomontading on his favourite subject, I replied rather impatiently:

"Mr. Moneymore, you admit that business is of importance, may I then speak of that which has brought me hither?"

“Nay, Mr. Deerhurst, I have to apologize for having so long delayed showing you Sir Roger’s letter of instructions to me, relative to your future conduct. Unfortunately, as he expresses it, from the conduct of his eldest son, Lionel, all his hopes now centre in you; however, before I go for the letter, you must take some refreshment; until it is announced, with your permission, I shall continue my explanation of Lord Beletrieve.”

I bowed my assent; indeed, I was too much agitated to speak. Could it be possible that Etienne Deerhurst was dead? And that from grief, penitence, or want of some other heir, Sir Roger was going to acknowledge me? And was I to be raised from all the *désagréments* of poverty, to such a proud position? Observing my silence, Mr. Moneymore imputed it to an interest in his conversation; looking full in my face, he exclaimed:

“Mr. Deerhurst, I must request your fixed attention, while you observe my wig, for it is a wig of no vulgar fashion.”

The abruptness and strangeness of this remark, at a moment when all my thoughts were absorbed in calculating the vast possessions of my heirship, appeared so absurd, that I gave way to unrestrained laughter. Like my poor father, my risible muscles were easily put into motion;

surely, I thought, the man is mad, and I am more likely to lose my thousand pounds, than to inherit old Sir Roger's lacs of rupees.

"I am by no means offended, Mr. Deerhurst," said Mr. Moneybags. "I know from Sir Roger that you are of a gay, volatile temper, fond of pleasure, and easily amused; however, my wig has its history,—hear it. In early youth, Lord Beletrieve was remarkable for his fine hair—a distinction of which he was very proud; and, as far as a very superficial knowledge of history admitted, traced it as a sign of high birth. At this period, he spent much time in Paris, and, according to the fashions of the *élite*, tied his hair partly behind, letting some luxuriant curls fall at either side over his ears. Well time, alas! Mr. Deerhurst, no respecter of persons, rolled on its footsteps, marked by the horrors of the French revolution; but worse far worse, it thinned the flowing locks of Lord Beletrieve. Powder and pomatum, in vain, struggled to hide the coming baldness; true, the effect of this memorable event had cleared a way for the defect to escape detection. But now, Mr. Deerhurst, for one of my secrets; nature who in other respects had formed Lord Beletrieve as a very model, had given him a pair of prodigious ears, quite flat at top and of a deep crimson hue which nothing

could remove, and they looked ill, alarmingly ill, near a complexion sallowed by the aforesaid time. Now what was to be done? Cropped heads were the style! As Lord Beletrieve pertinently observed, every innovation of the aristocracy was marked by the setting aside of some gentlemanly distinction, such as neglecting the studied forms of politeness, a gallant attention to the fair sex, a profound veneration to superior birth, rank, or position. More barbarous still was the clipping off the hair and drapery, for the unwashed rabble, finding them an inconvenience, and that they sat ungracefully on their unpractised limbs, violently condemned as effeminate an elegance they could not attain. *Bêtes!*" exclaimed Mr. Moneymore, taking a long pinch of snuff, and handing me the box; "it is Prince's mixture, Mr. Deerhurst," he added conceitedly.

I replied with vivacity, "You are very kind, Mr. Moneymore, but I never take snuff."

With profound gravity he answered: "You must learn to do so, Mr. Deerhurst, for Lord Beletrieve takes it."

"And pray, what is that to me;" I coldly demanded.

"All—every thing," was the answer, and then with a profound bow, he continued: "Mr. Deer-

hurst, in this dilemma, between loss of hair, and rather donkeyish ears, another man would have been for ever lost to fashion ; but the mighty genius of Beletrieve rose above his ears, and he invented and made a model for a wig ; went to France, remained *perdu* for a year, then returned to London. On the same night there was a fête at Holland or Lansdowne House, no matter which, a great political question was being discussed. The Prince and his Royal Brothers were there. Lord Beletrieve was announced ; he entered with all the grace of his courtly manner ; every eye was turned on his wig, which was elevated by his Lordship's unusual height above the crowd. The sensation it excited was quite electric, politics were forgotten, and wigs alone absorbed all the thoughts of this great assembly. The result need scarcely be told : that ornament so esteemed by our grandfathers, and whose magic perfumed circle enveloped so much of wisdom, of folly, of hope and fears, again resumed its influence in society ? The next day several of the young nobility went off to Paris, hoping to equal his Lordship's wig, or as it was termed, the Beletrieve ; while others were satisfied to have their heads shaven and ornamented with the best perruques London could produce. Mr. Deerhurst, though not noble I adopted the

fashion," and he bowed his head till the powder was scattered over my face. This put me out of humour, and I said sulkily, "Mr. Moneymore, I am no judge of perruques or wigs."

"Forgive me, Mr. Deerhurst, but the word wig or perruque is associated with a thousand ideas irrelevant to our subject. The practical wisdom and knowledge of a Lord Chancellor, the solemnity of a judge, the puffed rubicund cheeks of a coachman, the shrivelled drivelling face of an old beggar, all pop out in review before us, for imagination is a busy body. Not so with a Beletrieve; we see nothing but flowing ringlets, wafting the richest perfume over some fair one's gentle bosom, as love pours soft nonsense into her willing ear, while her admiring eyes rapturously rest on the Beletrieve."

"And is this," said I, pointing to Mr. Moneymore's wig, "a Beletrieve?"

"Yes, I assure you, one of the genuine Parisian cut, and thereby hangs a tale. You laugh, Mr. Deerhurst, at the expression, perhaps you think that I allude to the queue of my Beletrieve, by no means, it is a mere *façon de parler*. Now as his Lordship says, all *façons de parler*, and old saws and sayings are bad taste, and smell of antiquity, a subject which should never be alluded to in fashionable society,—seeing that one of

its great objects is to banish from the mind all painful recollections of the past, all thoughts of future;—in present enjoyment if we cannot stop the progress of time—”

Interrupting him, I exclaimed: “Crown it with a Beletrieve, and so hide its baldness.”

“A very just remark, Mr. Deerhurst; for seeing is believing, and what we do not see we are apt to forget.” Saying these words, Mr. Moneymore heaved a solemn sigh, observing, “Mr. Deerhurst, we learn these quaint sayings in our nursery, amidst that grade of society called nursery-maids, and in after-days they force themselves on our memory, and the vulgar truisms burst forth; but as his Lordship observes, true politeness is, of all accomplishments, the most difficult of attainment; it requires a constant sacrifice of our opinions to others, a practical good temper, and more difficult still, an apparent admiration of qualities we sincerely despise, and often a civility and attention to persons, whom, were we to follow the impulse of our inclination, we would literally kick out of our presence.”

Again, I indulged in laughter, for my own sensations illustrated the truth of the remark, as for the last half hour I had been devoutly wishing to prove my activity, by a gentle kicking of

the pompous fop. Far from being offended, Mr. Moneymore, who delighted in having a listener, seemed pleased, and with his apish grin continued:

"All this time, I have wandered from my Beletrieve, and the tail that hangs thereto. Know, Mr. Deerhurst, the mystery of its perfection, but remember it is a sacred trust; this, my Beletrieve, was originally intended for his Lordship; fortunately for my head, it will not suit his, for the springs pressed too tightly on his temples, which resisting the progress of the aforesaid time, retained their fulness; be that as it may, he ordered the Beletrieve to be returned to Paris, and his perruque-maker to be dismissed. Happily for me, I knew his valet, he acquainted me with the interesting fact. Not to dwell too much on particulars, by paying a large gratuity, the locks formed to grace the head of nobility, became mine, and as you may see they fit gracefully. It was a fortunate chance, Mr. Deerhurst, which thus garnished my temples."

"I have to thank you Mr. Moneymore," I replied, "for information so interesting, and shall in future know how to judge of wigs, and of the heads which support them. Shall we now to business, and for the present waive fashion, with whose mysteries I am totally unacquainted?"

"Mr. Deerhurst, to a young man in your position, fashion is business, and as I shall make it mine to bring about an immediate introduction between you and his Lordship, I will just give you a few more hints, as to what I shall term the style of appearance necessary for you to adopt. Of course your tailor—I must recommend you to mine—can do a vast deal; but then, there is attitude, and yours is too erect, too stately for the present mode, and might prejudice his Lordship against you. But as knowledge is ever more influential when we can trace it to its source, I shall now explain the origin of the curve in my back which I flatter myself has not escaped your notice."

"It is no flattery, Mr. Moneymore, for me to say it commanded my attention. Was I wrong in imputing it to weakness of the spine?"

"All your ideas, Mr. Deerhurst, are what I call unsophisticated; but a few weeks' intercourse with Lord Beletrieve and his set will reform you. The origin of the curve is this: his Lordship's epicurean habits led to delicacy of health; for it is a melancholy fact that, as yet, neither civilization nor science has succeeded in discovering a panacea for the evils inherent to our nature, such as disease, old age, death and pain, which by a most unhappy arrangement the noble seems to

suffer more than the peasant. Well, it so chanced, that some years ago—let me see, it is now seven—his lordship was attacked by rheumatic gout, of a very severe description, in his left leg and in his back. To the bodily torture thus inflicted on him, was the more insupportable mortification of having his debility discovered.”

“My dear sir,” said I, interrupting him somewhat petulantly, “I can readily understand that your Lord Beletrieve is a very fine gentleman, and that many pleasant passages may be told of his varied and fashionable existence; but I really did not call upon you to be amused by a recital of his adventures.”

“Softly, my young friend,” said Mr. Moneymore, sagely, “as I think it by no means improbable that you and I are to be brought more intimately together,—as you are a very young man, and moreover the grandson of my patron,—my friend, I may venture to call him—Sir Roger Deerhurst, I think I am doing you a service for which you will hereafter be grateful,—by communicating to you (in strict confidence be it remembered) some ‘passages’ as you call them in Lord Beletrieve’s career as at once illustrate the character of that distinguished man, and furnish materials for imitation to younger but congenial spirits. A celebrated author, my dear young gentleman, whom to read is to admire, admits

that vice loses half its horrors by losing all its grossness. Again, Mr. Deerhurst, as that profound philosopher, Gibbon, has written, half the world are guided by names, which, I opine, means that men are taken by their words. Hence I infer, that when I hold up to your observation and inspection, a character so illustrious as my friend, Lord Beletrieve—a man in whom all the graces unite,—who knows, perhaps better than any man breathing, how to soften—to mellow down the natural asperities of the passions—”

“May I inquire, Mr. Moneymore, as to the morals of a society that requires these refinements?”

“Truly, Mr. Deerhurst, you require improvement. The fact is, Sir Roger, who is an old man, has tainted your mind with obsolete notions of virtue, and all that. Wealth, not love, was his pursuit; and where we pursue one object with avidity, we often remain ignorant of others, and thus form erroneous views. But Lord Beletrieve by no means supports the present state of morals; on the contrary, he considers them so relaxed, that no wise man, he tells me, will venture to marry. However, his Lordship, who despises all prejudices, admits that the price of a virtuous woman is above rubies; and could such be found, men should marry. But, alas! such

precious gems are rare, consequently to most persons unattainable."

"A strange observation for his Lordship," I replied. "At least, it is very unlike what, from your former account of him, I was led to expect."

He answered, "To the man of the world, nothing is strange. Among the Beletrieve set are many men of extensive information and of high talent; but they have chosen present enjoyment for their pursuit, and fashion as their presiding goddess. But no more of this. Before you are one of the initiated, you have much to learn. To begin, I must return to the graceful bend of the back. When Lord Beletrieve was attacked with gout, he consulted his physician, confiding to him that death would be preferable to an exposure of his misfortune. The physician, a wise, intelligent man, at once entered into his feelings, which he considered not only perfectly natural, but laudable; advised him, on the instant, to write letters to all his most familiar and intimate friends, regretting that unexpected business obliged him to set off for Italy without so much as saying one farewell. This done, the next business was to remove his Lordship, by night, to a solitary house near Hampton Court, where for six months he attended him with such care and skill,

that at the end of that period, his Lordship set off privately for Italy. In nine months afterwards, he returned to London, (it was the very height of the season), bringing over some rare articles of *virtu*, which he presented to the Prince of Wales, with an assurance that he had gone to Athens expressly to collect them for his Royal Highness. The Prince received them most graciously, and on the following day invited a large party to meet Lord Beletrieve, and to see his presents. The assembly met, and many were surprised at the alteration a few months had made in his Lordship's appearance. He looked pallid, exhausted ; had a slight lameness in his left foot, and his back was stooped. Aware of these personal defects, and resolved to hide their origin, he planned a method to turn them to advantage. To this end, when the dessert was placed on the table, he managed to command the Prince's particular attention ; as a matter of course, that of all the party followed ; then in a calm, bland voice, he related a few amusing anecdotes, and afterwards, with apparent carelessness, spoke of some English nobles whom he had met at Florence, but who—though fine and accomplished young men—had, in consequence of their appearance of robust health, been excluded by the exclusives. 'Indeed,' he continued, turning towards

the Prince, 'your Royal Highness will, I have no doubt, agree with me in thinking that the English exclusives in Italy are too refined, when I acquaint you with the following circumstances. May I first take the liberty of reminding your Royal Highness that more than once you have complimented me on my dancing? Having elicited your royal admiration, it naturally became my proudest boast; and being solicitous to excite a favourable sensation in Florence, I took every opportunity of displaying my figure, more especially in the waltz. But, judge my astonishment—nay, I may truly say, despair—when I saw that I began to be neglected by the exclusives. Happily I possessed a sincere friend among them, who acquainted me that dancing, or in fact, any movement that showed a perfect strength and elasticity of limbs had for the last three weeks been by the exclusives dubbed as vulgar; and that although they might admit within the pale of their select society certain persons whose moral characters would not bear a microscopic examination—'

"My dear Sir," said I, almost maddened by my companion's prolixity, "I must say—"

"Say nothing at present, but listen," he returned; "though they might admit, as I have just observed, certain clouded characters, still,

that was *tout-à-fait autre chose* from associating with anything vulgar. The very word vulgar was the antipodes of fashion, and caused a revulsion of feeling within its select circles. Besides, vulgarity was an existing evil, and required to be guarded against; whereas, morals had become obsolete, and any attempt to revive them by fastidious objections or invidious remarks on the conduct of persons in a certain class, would be quite a Quixotic business—a fighting in the dark against an invisible power—rendering the exalted feeling which strove to bring back the romance and virtue of a former age a subject of ridicule and contempt, and thus injuring in place of serving the cause. Now, your Royal Highness, as this reasoning of my familiar spirit was too profound to be disputed, I satisfied myself by demanding how dancing, so long sanctioned by fashion, and which at once combined music, grace, exercise, and excitement, had become so obnoxious as to incur the awful charge of vulgarity? She replied, ‘Why the fact is this, a short time ago the Marchese Zoppo came hither from Rome, and excited a great sensation; indeed, scandal went so far as to say that a certain Princess, whom he had met in Berlin, was his familiar spirit; however, on the truth of this I cannot decide, but one thing is certain, although the Marchese was of

patrician birth and in possession of a princely fortune, his proudest boast was a slight lameness of his left ankle, and a gentle, almost imperceptible curve of his back, which he called a Grecian bend? Now, Beletrieve,' continued my fair familiar, 'although I am certain that these high attributes of fashion will to many appear a blemish, and that in due time dancing will resume its influence, still for the present I would strongly advise you to study the Zoppo graces; you have a great advantage in your exalted height, which even exceeds the Marchese's. It may be, your Royal Highness, a weakness to admit—for I consider that all weakness consists in the admission—that I became so emulous to attain these perfections, that at an exorbitant price I engaged a French dancing-master to instruct me in the Zoppo art.' Observing that the Prince laughed at the idea, without changing his grave manner he said, 'I can solemnly assure your Royal Highness, that more than one young man of fashion had the tendon Achilles of his left leg slightly cut to obtain the desired accomplishment. So far, success might be commanded by all who possessed heroism in the cause; but the Grecian bend was more difficult of attainment, indeed, to some impossible. It required height, and rather a slight form. In vain the short and

stout-made studied the Zoppo stoop; they might indeed mock the grace, by slouching their shoulders or stooping their backs forward, and thus rendering themselves ridiculous by aiming at an advantage they were not formed to possess.' But, Mr. Deerhurst, passing over all the remarks the Prince was pleased to make, and his compliments to Lord Beletrieve, I shall on this subject merely add, that a few days after the Prince's dinner to Lord Beletrieve, there was not a fashionable to be seen in Hyde Park who did not attempt to sport the Zoppo graces; and Monsieur Moussard, who opened an academy for their instruction realized, before the end of three months, a large fortune. As to his Lordship, next to the Prince he became the most admired man in London, 'the observed of all observers.' Thus his genius rose above his broken health, and what would have sent another to pine away life in a *fauteuil*, enveloped in flannels and surrounded by nurses, raised him to the very pinnacle of the *haut ton*. But you look exhausted, Mr. Deerhurst; permit me to ring for the refreshments."

So saying, he rose on his long legs, and skipped over to the bell with something of the movement of a kangaroo. I saw this was a *ruse* to show off the Zoppo graces; and though I laughed at seeing foppery so caricatured, still I disliked him so

sincerely, I was resolved not to humour his folly by a single compliment.

Refreshments being announced, we descended to the dining-room, which in keeping with every thing else in that region of vanity, was elaborately spread out with plate and glass, sumptuous enough to entertain the Prince. The repast was exquisite, and my stomach, long inured to the scant and ill-dressed fare of Oxford Street, in spite of conscience, which assured me that these preparations were not made for my poverty, partook largely of the viands; in this I was joined by Mr. Moneybags, so I concluded that a good appetite did not come under the class of the Beletrieve's vulgarities. There was consolation in this, at least while I had a thousand pounds to feast on.

Ever and anon, while partaking of his costly fare, I could observe my host scanning uneasily my antiquated garments, and evidently perplexed by the result of his observations. At length, as though a new light had broken upon him, he cried out in an agitated tone:—

“Positively, Mr. Deerhurst, I am at a loss to understand—ha! now I have it; you only escaped from shipwreck. Good heaven! how you frighten me. Speak quickly, dear Sir, and relieve my mind from the apprehension of your luggage being lost. It must have been of considerable

value, for Sir Roger, in his letter announcing your intention of coming to England, expressly stated that during your stay in London, it was his desire that you should be surrounded by a princely retinue. Excuse me, Mr. Deerhurst, but on the instant of our introduction, you should have acquainted me with this very great misfortune. What is now to be done? I have no orders from Sir Roger relative to supplying you."

With a very grave countenance I answered: "I assure you, Mr. Moneymore, I was quite ignorant of having been shipwrecked; on the contrary, whenever I chanced to be at sea, my voyages have been prosperous. As to an order from Sir Roger, I have one in my pocket, the ostensible cause why I have now the honour of your acquaintance."

So saying, with a low bow, and I fear rather a sneering expression of countenance, I handed him the draft. The whole truth burst on his astonished soul. He actually trembled with rage and vexation. In a voice stifled with passion, he exclaimed:—

"And who are you who dared to come here and impose upon me to such a degree, that I not only sent an apology at an awkward hour to Lord Beletrieve, but confided to you his secrets? Good heaven! what infatuation," and he actually

stamped on the ground, striking his forehead with violence; then glaring on me, he exclaimed, "Sir, you are an impostor!"

"By no means, Mr. Moneybags; all the mistake was of your own making. Now be pleased to say who you supposed me to be."

"You announced yourself as Mr. Deerhurst. Your card is on my dressing-table."

"And so I am," I replied, laughing; for I enjoyed the fop's misery.

He seemed startled, and then in a subdued tone said:

"Are you Mr. Etienne Eustace Deerhurst? If so, excuse me; but really I am bewildered."

"No," I replied haughtily. "But I am Freville Deerhurst, Sir Roger's rightful heir."

He made his kangaroo step, calling out:

"Now the mystery is explained—you are the beggared son," and he glanced his eyes contemptuously on my dress, "of that Lionel Deerhurst whom Sir Roger disinherited, and you came here to play off some vulgar hoax. Quit my house, Sir. I will not honour your draft; and if you delay another instant, I shall order my servant to show you out."

Before he concluded the last sentence, I shook my cane over his head, exclaiming:

"Fop as you are, dare not again to speak dis-

respectfully of my father, or to address me except as a gentleman."

"I am no coward, Mr. Deerhurst," he replied, with something like dignity; "still, I have no wish to enter into a quarrel with you."

And he was moving from the room, when I called out:

"Have you no money of Sir Roger Deerhurst's in your hands, that you decline honouring this draft?"

"Thousands, tens of thousands!" he answered petulantly. But," and he hesitated, "I must request an explanation how this draft came into your possession."

I replied carelessly, for I was tired of the whole scene, "It was forwarded for my use by Sir Roger to Lord Plinlimmon. But if you, Mr. Moneymore, hesitate about its acceptance, I have only to write to his Lordship, which I shall do this evening," and I advanced with a proud step towards the door.

"Stay a moment, Mr. Deerhurst," he called out. "Matters of business must be attended to, not hurried over." He then scanned the draft with great attention, muttering, "There can be no mistake; Sir Roger himself drew this out." Then turning to me, he added, "Mr. Deerhurst, you say that you have received this direct from Lord Plinlimmon?"

As he examined the note, I marked with surprise the change in his manner. All the foppery of fashion was laid aside, and he wore the anxious, important look of a man engaged in money matters. On his questioning me, I answered :

“ Let there be no further mistake, the draft was forwarded to me through Lord Plinlimmon, who, from friendship to my uncle, Mr. Arnheim, wrote to Sir Roger in my favour.”

“ And who is the Reverend Mr. Arnheim ?” he demanded, in his insolent manner.

I answered with indignation, “ Mr. Arnheim is a clergyman of superior talents and strict morality.”

“ Pshaw !” he answered. “ How Lord Beltrieve would laugh at all this cant. Superior talents !—strict morality !—absurd. However, Mr. Deerhurst, this draft appears correct ; still, I should like to see some vouchers to prove your identity. Collect them, and then on next Tuesday, at twelve, call at my office in Mark Lane, and your business shall be settled.” So saying, he rang the bell, calling out, “ Open the door for this gentleman.” Before I was half-way down the stairs, I heard him scream out, “ If that shabby fellow ever calls again, of course I am not at home.”

I felt all the insolence of the *parvenu*, but

despised him too much to resent it. On reaching the hall door, a new vexation occurred; it was raining violently, and a footman, whom I had not before observed, respectfully requested that I would step into the dining-hall till the shower passed off. As he spoke, I recognized in him a person of the name of Pat Mulcahy; he had lived with the Tennants in Cork. With ready Irish wit, the fellow entered into a ludicrous account of Mr. Moneymore's miserly habits, grafted on pompous display. He also said, that on the following week he purposed quitting his service, being engaged to Lord Beletrieve, whom Pat designated as the noblest nobleman in all England. To my inquiry how he had discovered me, he replied, that the servants being amused at the vaunted heir of Sir Roger Deerhurst arriving in such shabby trim—I give Pat's words—he peeped into the saloon to see him, and in a moment twigged me; but shrewdly concluding that I came to impose on Mr. Moneymore, resolved not to betray my secret.

I smiled at his Irish honesty, but still thanked him. A few moments after, we saw Mr. Moneymore drive off. Pat then called a coach, and I returned to Oxford Street.

CHAPTER V.

I REPAIRED next day to Mr. Moneymore's office in the City, and found, to my astonishment, that he peremptorily refused to cash the draft, on the plea of having received no direct communication from Sir Roger. Had I not been totally inexperienced in business I might have seen through this flimsy evasion, and have suspected what I afterwards ascertained to be the fact, that this aper of fashion, malignant at the mistake of which I was the innocent occasion, resolved to avenge himself by retarding the payment, which my appearance convinced him was so necessary to my comfort. This blow came upon me quite unexpectedly, and I turned from the office in a truly miserable state of mind.

Without a friend in the great city, I might almost say in the kingdom, and burning with offended pride, I was driven almost to despair. My troubled spirit at length found consolation by recurring to Clara and the Parsonage; and conquering the reluctance which I felt at addressing

myself to Mr. Arnheim, as a suppliant for his assistance and advice, I sat down and briefly communicated to him the disappointment of my hopes, and the desolate position in which I found myself.

Having concluded my letter, in spite of the threatening aspect of the weather, I set off at a brisk pace to the Post Office. On my return, I was overtaken by a shower, and in making a sudden rush to get into shelter, I nearly upset a gentleman who was waiting for his carriage. Of course I turned round to apologize, when after looking steadily at me, he exclaimed with vivacity :

“Grown up as you are, I think I cannot be mistaken in my young friend, Freville Deerhurst?”

While he addressed me, I recognized in him Mr. Tennant altered, indeed, from the comely, quiet, industrious man of business, to the well-dressed, positively handsome man of fashion. I returned his salute with a glow of pleasure.

“Let me take a full view of you, Freville,” he added, smiling, and stepping some paces back, so as to command my person. “Why you are upwards of six feet high, and such limbs and shoulders; and it is not quite three years since I treated and ordered you about as a school-boy. I must be angry with you and Aigline for making an old man of me.”

I interrupted him with vivacity, exclaiming: "And how are dear Aigline and George? And where are they now?"

"George," he replied, "is on the wide and distant seas, but I know not his present destination, and Aigline is in London; but, Freville, for the present waive inquiries, I would not mar the happiness of meeting you, and since we last met, I have experienced irremediable sorrow, and acquired what, I fear, will prove but transitory enjoyment. But life is a chequered scene. However," he rejoined with a forced laugh, "a truce to melancholy. I see no chance of this shower clearing off, so if not otherwise engaged, perhaps you will accompany me, and as we drive along you can tell all your adventures. Where is your father, Major Deerhurst, at present? And do you still remember Clara Arnheim, your pretty cousin, about whom George and Aigline so constantly teased you?"

I replied, with emotion, "It is long since I have heard either from, or of my father; but he is in some of the Western Isles; and as to Clara, she is dearer to me than ever: and now, Mr. Tenant, I request of you to acquaint me with every circumstance connected with your own family. I have never forgotten the happy days spent at Glanmire Water, nor my gratitude for all your kindness."

He answered, playfully: "Come, come, no compliments between old friends; and now, in answer to your questions, soon after you left Cork, George—and he, you know, was destined for the navy—having obtained his appointment, we all went to Portsmouth to ship off the young middy. An unexpected surprise awaited me there, I found myself the master of a large fortune by the death of an old gentleman whom I had obliged in life, and who, being without any nearer connexions, testified his gratitude by making me his heir. It is a long story, and I will not punish you with the recital."

Grasping his hand, I was warmly congratulating him on his good fortune and happiness, when, contracting his brow, with a quivering lip, he replied:

"My young friend, talk not to me of happiness. I have lost her whom no wealth can replace—my wife is dead! But a truce to these gloomy reminiscences. You will be glad to hear that your old friend, Aigline, is looked upon as the handsomest and most accomplished of the votaries of fashion. But it waxes late, we must now part; and remember, I shall expect you tomorrow in Grosvenor Square, which must be your head-quarters during your stay in London.

CHAPTER VI.

WITH a light step, and a heart considerably relieved, I hurried next day to Grosvenor Square, and, as I passed through the lofty hall and spacious staircase, I was struck with the contrast between the elegance of their decorations, and the elaborate splendour of the Moneymore residence. I was buried in a philosophical reverie on the vicissitudes of life, when the door of the room, into which I had been ushered, flew open, and Aigline—the beautiful Aigline—sprang forward to greet and to welcome me. Not quite three years had elapsed since we last parted in Cork, she was then about sixteen, and so handsome, that I could find no words sufficient to express my admiration; and since then my memory had often reverted to her as she sat dressing dolls, to man a tiny yacht which, under Mr. Tennant's instructions, I had built for Clara, or, with comprehen-

sive genius, hurried over her different lessons, so as to be in time to row down the water with her brother, Charles Mellish, La Franck, and myself, when as she gaily guided the helm, she would warble forth the songs of her native land, while I, leaving the more arduous task of rowing to my companions, accompanied her with my flute, in spite of the angry looks of Mellish, whose boyish love for her already subjected him to the pangs of jealousy. All this I had remembered, and the various scenes connected with the bright days spent at Glanmire Villa; and her father had said, that the admiration she awakened was a passport to the first society; yet I had formed no conception of the loveliness that now stood before me; no, not in the hour when my vivid imagination was most exalted had I fancied a face and form of such exquisite proportions. To describe her, I might say that she combined the fine chiselled features of a Grecian Venus, with the blushing softness of a Hebe; that her hair was dark and glossy as the raven's wing, her eyes of the deepest blue, her lips and teeth full of freshness; but all description must fall short of the varying and intellectual expression of her countenance, in which consisted her greatest charm. Lord Beletrieve, of whom I shall hereafter speak, was heard to say, that she was an

illustration of the poet's animated description of the beautiful Lady of Coventry :

Whene'er with soft serenity she smil'd,
Or caught the orient blush of quick surprise,
How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild,
The liquid lustre darted from her eyes.

Each look, each motion, spoke an inborn grace,
Which o'er her form its transient glory cast ;
Some lovelier wonder soon usurped its place,
Chased by a charm still lovelier than the past.

In form, Aigline was rather below the middle size ; but though very slight, her limbs were so perfectly rounded, that Canova might have taken her as a model for one of his graces. So imposing was her appearance, so dazzling her beauty, that as she stood smiling and blushing, I continued gazing, so absorbed in wonder, that I never thought of returning her salute.

After waiting a few moments in expectation of my addressing her, in a playful, but half reproachful tone, she said :

“Freville, hither I flew to receive you as a companion and friend, and you scarcely deign to acknowledge me ! Are we then to meet as strangers ? If so, Mr. Deerhurst, excuse the freedom of my address—the result of ‘auld lang syne,’ and permit me to request the honour of

your accompanying me to the breakfast parlour, where Mr. Tennant waits to receive you."

I caught her hand, and pressing it rapturously to my lips, exclaimed: "Aigline, you must excuse an awkwardness, which sprung from my admiration of yourself. Positively, nature never produced anything so beautiful! Is there not a fable, where every one who gazed on a certain princess was turned into a statue? Such is the effect your charms have on me."

She burst into a laugh, as she answered: "What a strange compliment to prove me to be of such a petrifying nature. If all my admirers are turned into statues, to what a stupid destiny I am consigned! Why, though I were as vain as Lord Beletrieve, it would be no compensation; but, Freville, your metaphors were always a little incongruous; however, I am glad to find that you are not changed. But all this time papa is waiting. Yet, one word before we join him: am I more beautiful than Clara Arnheim?" as she spoke, she playfully pressed her finger to her lip, and shook her head.

"By all the laws of gallantry," I exclaimed, adopting her gay mood, "I should give the preference to present company. But, in plain sincerity, methinks that Paris himself would have found it difficult to decide between your

Houri style of beauty, and Clara's Madonna face and form."

Again she laughed; and oh! that sorrow should ever have hushed that happy laugh, as she sportively answered:

"Why, Freville, you must have learned to blunder in Ireland! Was there ever so grotesque a compliment to place my rival among the highest of the Christian saints, and make poor me a soulless being—a mere plaything, to amuse some three-tailed bashaw of a Turk! Really, I am quite offended," and, drawing herself up with a stately air, she walked out of the room.

I followed, and as I entered the breakfast parlour, Mr. Tennant rose, and received me with as much courtesy, as if I had been the obliger, he the obliged.

Aigline, whose gay spirits were never restrained by her father's presence, immediately set about quizzing me for my awkward compliments. Soon after Mr. Tennant retired. Being left alone with Aigline, she first obtained my promise to continue in Grosvenor Square, adding,

"And now for my plans, Freville, I must use all my interest with Lord Beletrieve to introduce you into the world of fashion. If I succeed, what with your personal advantages—for you are not very ill-looking—your musical talents, which

I hope you have not neglected, and his patronage, I foresee you will be one of the dandies of the season: for observe, macaronies are out of date—the very name sunk into oblivion.”

“It is a brilliant prospect,” I answered playfully; “at all events, introduce me to this Lord Beletrieve, for he seems a kind of Marquis of Carrabbas, forced on my notice by every person to whom I speak.”

“And you,” said she, smiling archly, and pointing to a confoundedly ill-shaped pair of square-toed boots, a little the worse for the wear, and which I had put on in consequence of my Hessians being under the care of a cobbler, “are to perform the part of the cat, and seek out some Princess for him.”

Although provoked at her sarcasm, I laughed, and, to change the subject—for I never could endure ridicule—said, “Aigline, describe Lord Beletrieve; I want to discover whether your portrait will agree with Mr. Moneymore’s caricature.”

“Describe Lord Beletrieve? What an impossible task! However, I can give you what a painter would term a rough outline of his person: as to his mental qualifications, facts alone can do them justice, and for those you must abide patiently; I would not anticipate your study of

his character,—mark me it is a black-letter book. To commence: his Lordship's age is about sixty—thanks to the Peerage, no mistake there; his height six feet two; proportions just; in youth he would not have disgraced a Hercules; his whole form set off to the best advantage by his tailor, and his face delicately shaded by the luxuriant flow of his peruke, the—”

“Oh, stop its description!” I exclaimed, “for there you cannot excel Mr. Moneybags’s.”

“Then I come to his eyes, which, though dim in sight, are bright to view; his lips are pallid, but smile blandly; his countenance is irresistible, from its Cupid—no not Cupid, the ugly, chubbed, fat boy, but from its own expression—to women, so full of languishing tenderness; to men, of calm dignity, tinctured with *hauteur*. Then he is a senator, a privy-councillor; a first rate favourite with the Prince: and, next to his Royal Highness, the leader of London fashion:—prouder distinction still, he is chief of the Cosmopolite Club—an association whose proudest boast is, that rising above all the prejudices of patriotism, domestic affections, or divine hopes, they live solely for themselves, and not for their body corporate, for that would be diverging from the concentration of the individual selfishness which forms at once their bane and antidote.

Then, though no wit himself, his Lordship is a great admirer of other men's genius, that is, if it pay him homage; add to this, he is a favourite with several ladies of quality, and whenever he condescends to pay attention, he boasts of being irresistible, for, observe, to yield to any violent feeling would be against the fundamental spirit of cosmopolitism. Among his minor attractions—minor as being more attainable—may be placed a villa on the Thames, of which Lucullus might have been proud; a splendid London residence, embellished with the rarest articles of *vertu*, innumerable Venuses, Apollos, Cupids; in short, taste as well as luxury preside over its adornment, and all is in keeping with its splendour."

She paused, and I observed, "Aigline, add that he is a most inspiring subject who could draw forth from you such a tirade. Now tell me, how did Miss Tennant get acquainted with him, and what does she do with this very great man?"

"That question, Freville," she replied, "obliges me to appear very vain. One evening I went to Covent Garden to see the inimitable Siddons in the character of Mrs. Haller, and being then uninitiated in fashionable life, was in a perfect ecstacy at her performance. It chanced that the

he honoured me by his notice,
me beautiful."

"Don't blush so unmercifully,
smiling. "I am not going to be
dispute his Royal Highness's opi

"Well, Freville, as Lord Beletrie
necessary to establish his Royal H:
for him to another box ; and, for
after a strict examination, his Lor
and thus I was at once brought i
more, the next day Lord Beletrie
my father, and as he afterwards
didly told me, congratulated him
that, though a *nouveau riche*, he
sentable. In his Lordship's coo
our merits, discovering my mus
recommended that I should imm
finishing lessons on the harp, in
start, not, Freville, in waltzing.
artistes who were to honour me."

'Miss Tennant,' solemnly observed his Lordship, 'be indefatigable in improving yourself, and in three months I shall give a concert for the express purpose of introducing you into fashionable life, where, between the Prince's approbation of your beauty, and my patronage, I flatter myself no one will presume to object to your society.' Such, Freville, were the circumstances which led to my introduction into the magic circle, and at present no entertainment would be thought perfect without my company. Princes, Dukes, Ambassadors, Duchesses, all court my smiles. Need you then wonder if this little head is turned?" and she laid her taper fingers on it.

"Aigline," I replied, "you astonish me beyond all expression; I wonder not at your being admired, it could not be otherwise, but that from any motive your father could place you so much under the guidance of Lord Beletrieve, a professed libertine, or launch you without a mother's protection into scenes of dissipation; you that were educated by her with such watchful and religious strictness."

"Oh! do not speak of my poor mother," she exclaimed in a tone of deep feeling; "her death caused me unspeakable affliction, and yet it is but nine months since she died. 'This mockery of

woe!" and she pointed to her mourning-dress, which she still wore. " Yet my father and I are the gayest of the gay. I once thought such things could not be, but we are launched into the giddy vortex of fashion, and this, more than the cold marble, shuts out her inestimable memory ;" so saying, she hurried from the apartment.

That evening Aigline went to the Opera with a Lady Mainstown, who, I understood, acted as her *chaperon* to the brilliant scenes into which she was then an admitted and admired guest. Mr. Tennant remained with me, and in spite of my objections, forced on my acceptance what he termed the loan of a large sum of money.

" If ever you are Sir Rogers's heir," he said smiling, " you can repay me ; if not, you are most welcome to partake of the current of wealth so rapidly gliding away."

He sighed deeply, and I thought looked unhappy. Next morning, immediately after breakfast I accompanied Aigline to her music-room, or boudoir. There, in her playful manner, she criticised my dress, recommending to me the first artists of fashion. Admitting that my appearance savoured of the purlieus of St. Giles, I resigned the improvement of my person into her hands, then requested she would acquaint me with the source of her father's wealth.

"Oh," she replied, "I never could find leisure to relate the tedious particulars, so a few words must explain. You are aware that my father is capable of the most generous acts of friendship. Well, some person whom in early life he was the means of setting up in business, realised an immense fortune, and, having no family, on his death-bed he bequeathed to my father upwards of a hundred thousand pounds, twenty of which were settled on my brother George; but having imbibed some very unreasonable antipathy to the fair daughters of Eve, he did not even mention my name in his testament. Was not that very ungallant of the old merchant?"

I answered her gaily, but remarked :

"However, as it is in your father's possession, you need not regret it."

I thought she looked grave, but after a moment said :

"Now, Freville, as you and I are to be domiciled together, in all honesty I must acquaint you that I am on the eve of being married—or am supposed to be so. Consequently, there must be an end to your fine compliments, even if your heart was not devoted to Clara Arnheim, and my hand to Lord Chanceley. Still, regarding you as a friend, I would not admit of the gallantry which, by giving an appearance of trifling and

insincerity to our intercourse, must destroy confidence."

"And who is Lord Chanceley?" I demanded, "and is the hand alone engaged?"

She sighed audibly, then in a low voice replied, "Freville, be satisfied with what I choose to confide, and inquire not too curiously. However, in answer to your first question, Lord Chanceley is next heir to an earldom, and in present possession of a noble fortune,—distinctions enough for any man; at least, so think the denizens of fashion."

"Add and a man of taste," I interrupted, "proved by his selection of you."

She replied hastily:

"Taste and feeling had nothing to say to the preference. He heard that the Prince admired, that Lord Beletrieve patronized me; in these circumstances lie all my attractions. Why, Freville, men of fashion, with a few eccentric exceptions, choose their wives on the judgment of those who affect to be connoisseurs, and, I can tell you, are confoundedly angry if they fail to elicit general admiration."

"Then, Aigline, I have to congratulate you on the prospect of being a Countess. Is Lord Chanceley a man of talent?"

She laughed, exclaiming, "He has but one idea,

that is to imitate his great prototype, Lord Beletrieve. Nevertheless, should we ever be united, he shall find me a devoted wife. As Lady Chanceley, I can burst the trammels of fashion and folly which now encompass me without losing a position rendered, by the delusions of ambition and gratified vanity, absolutely necessary, I verily believe, to my existence."

"How soon," I demanded, "is this union, which, on your side, appears to be one of ambition to be solemnized?"

"Ah!" she replied, "that is the question. Alas! I cannot answer, except, indeed, I could prevail upon Lord Beletrieve to nominate the day."

"Lord Beletrieve, Aigline!" I cried.

"Yes, Freville, my destiny is in his hands; he is the Coryphæus of a set among whom his will or taste is a law."

"And," I interrupted, "he is in love with you himself. Well, Aigline," I added, sarcastically, "after all, ambition being the object, Lady Beletrieve will sound just as well as Lady Chanceley. In either case, I congratulate your Ladyship."

"Nonsense," she angrily answered; "the idea of Lord Beletrieve's marrying is so very absurd. However, next Monday I am to have a concert

honoured by his presence. See him, and judge for yourself."

"Then why should he interfere in your union with Lord Chanceley, Aigline?"

"Another very simple question, yet to which I can give no reasonable answer, further than that I apprehend his interference; yet why or wherefore, I cannot with all my woman's wit divine."

"You are fanciful, Aigline."

"And you provoking, Freville; but judge from the following facts. Three weeks have passed since Lord Chanceley, in all due form, proposed for me; and though, from a knowledge of Lord Beletrieve's influence over my passionless lover, I have frequently attempted to introduce the subject, he has always gracefully eluded it. You know I was at the Opera last night; Lord Chanceley sat by my side, and was quite elaborate in his description of my nuptial jewels, equipages, residences, &c., &c., being pleasing and flattering subjects to which I granted a willing ear, when who should lounge into our box but Lord Beletrieve, who, after a moment, said, 'Chanceley, what is the humour of this? I claim Miss Tennant as my peculiar care.' With an obsequious bow, upjumped Chanceley, making way for his Lordship. Every glass seemed pointed

towards us, and the Prince absolutely smiled and shook his head at Lord Beletrieve. Resolved to put an end to future interruptions, I turned round and said, 'My Lord, though the subject is very embarrassing, I wish to acquaint you with an event, which I am confident you already know. My nup—' 'Ha! stop,' he cried, laying his hand on my arm; then in a tone of pseudo gallantry he continued, 'dark browed daughter of Erin's saintly isle, why destroy a pleasing illusion? At present I consider you quite charming, would you become disagreeable by the tedium of obliging me to listen to what you say I already know. Then if the tale embarrasses, in the name of the loves and graces, desist, desist. At this instant your bloom is perfect, another shade would deepen it into red, vulgar red. Come, no trembling, no blushing, no feeling; they are all in bad taste; nay, are as grotesque as if you took out a crook and I a fife: it would be rather a sheepish fashion, would it not, Aigline? Ill-natured people might ridicule us.' I could not resist laughing, for to give effect to his words he held up his cane, and whistled a pastoral air. During this time Lord Chanceley looked on quite delighted that his Lordship honoured me by his notice. Now, Freville, should Lord Beletrieve choose to in-

terfere, what chance have I with a man who, almost on the eve of marriage, would resign his place to a rival?"

"At all events, Aigline, it will not be a heart-breaking affair." I said this bitterly.

"Ambition has its griefs, its despairs, as well as love," she answered; "but, Freville, romantic as you are, once introduced into the magic circle, I do not doubt but that I shall see you bow before its idol. Nay more, if you brought your Clara here, learn to value her by the number of her admirers. Pleasant state of society! I wonder what would Britain's stalwart knights of the olden times have thought, who considered that the honour of their stately dames should be as bright and unsullied as the blades of the good swords which they would have buried to the hilt in the breast of any who dared to breathe a word against them, could they rise from their narrow beds, and witness this most extraordinary change of manners, and its still stranger results. But here comes my father: observe, he must not even suspect the indecision of Lord Chanceley's character."

On the Saturday previous to Aigline's concert, I was introduced to Lord Beletrieve. From the accounts I had received, and Mr. Moneymore's grotesque caricature, I expected to see an old beau, dressed in foppish fashion, and with a

flippant, affected address. On the contrary, he was a perfect gentleman, who, without the formal stateliness of the *vieille cour*, possessed its dignified politeness, carefully shunning every observation likely to wound the feelings of his hearers, and by the graceful urbanity of his manners, disguising his innate, indomitable selfishness. His dress was peculiar, but became him well; nankeen tights, blue coat, with gilt buttons, white Marseilles vest. The very slight curve in his back was not unbecoming, and his lameness, which he struggled to conquer, scarcely perceptible. Born to high rank, large fortune, uniting to these the advantages of manly beauty, and talents far above mediocrity, he might have raised himself to the highest place in the senate of his country. But he had sacrificed all to the pursuit of idle pleasures, and at the age of sixty found himself rapidly gliding into the vale of years, and unpossessed of one solid advantage. His health was faded, his fortune involved, his boasted Cosmopolite Club sinking into disrepute. Younger and less endowed men were usurping his place in society,—a new order of things being established. True, he was still the leader of a set who studiously copied his every action, but he had too much intellect for his position—it is a great curse—he began to despise himself; this soured

his temper. He became envious, jealous, misanthropic. There is no misanthropy so profound or dangerous as that which emanates from mortified vanity; but these discontents had no effect on the outward man. He still continued his graspings after notoriety and conquest; the bland smile and persuasive manner were the same; the cold sneer and expressive shrug which had cast scorn on many a noble heart, had lost none of their power. Reputation, hope, virtue, still withered before them. My hand trembles as I acknowledge that, captivated by the graces of this Belial, and yielding to the influence of opinion, in defiance of all I had learned of his character, I became one of his most devoted admirers and imitators. Unhappily, from caprice, he took a fancy to me, showed me some kindness, which did not interfere with his own views, and sought my society. Need I add, the effect which this interview had on my unfixed principles.

Aigline did not spare her raillery, pointing out how much wiser I had spoken for her than acted for myself. Although my greatest ambition was to be initiated into the Cosmopolite Club, still, as I had the good taste not to copy his Lordship's dress, or personal defects, she gratified her playful humour by making her at-

tendant, Ellen, place one of his old perukes on my table ; and sometimes, to oblige her, I sported it of an evening, when we chanced to be without company, which seldom occurred. Strange that men can at once despise and worship the grotesque and polluted idols of fashion !

CHAPTER VII.

ON the evening of Aigline's concert, Beletrieve, by appointment, came early to tise with her. He had a just taste for some knowledge of the sciences, and affected great deal more. Aigline, who looked exquisitely beautiful, and resolved to win his attention, gain his sanction to her projected nuptials, stood by her harp, said :

“ My Lord, gratify me by attending patiently while I explain a matter, to me of the dire consequence, as connected with my future happiness.”

“ Future happiness !” he retorted, with a trivial start. Then in a reproachful tone, he said : “ Though I confess the unpleasant truth of the *passé*, still I am not quite so gone as to be altogether a father confessor to youth and beauty as

yours. Besides, we Cosmopolites shun the mysterious doctrines connected with the future. *Dum vivimus vivamus*, is our motto."

"Nay, my Lord," she gravely replied, "I do not mean my happiness in another world, but my prospects in this; so let me entreat of you to be serious."

"Serious," he interrupted, "why it would destroy the present blissful illusion. Serious, where beauty, music, and feasting preside! forbid it, Comus, thou god of mirth and revelry. Nay, Aigline, shade not your fair brow with that frown of anger. Remember; to be serious is to reflect, —to reflect, to reason—to reason, to be sad; for reflection raises to our view disappointment, sorrow, old age, debility, death, and its hideous accompaniments. Is there not some quaint philosophy which goes to prove that all we see most charming in nature is owing to some visual deception? If, then, the loveliness of this sphere we inhabit is but an *ignus fatuus*, a brightness springing from corruption, is it not far better to yield to the illusion, than by dispersing it, rush into the knowledge of stern, uncompromising truths, and evils over which the united powers of man can have no control? Credit me, Aigline, all wisdom consists in enjoying the present; the past we

have lost, the future may not be for us ; we live to-day, to-morrow we may die. Then—

“ Away with melancholy,
Which doleful changes bring.”

He sung this out in admirable style ; I could not resist laughing at Aigline’s defeat, but tears started into her eyes. On the instant, company began to arrive ; she stepped forward to receive them, when turning to me, with his inimitable shrug, Lord Beletrieve remarked :

“ Aigline would raise me to the honour of being the *friend* of the family. Bah ! it is too absurd,” and taking a pinch of snuff, he advanced to one of the royal princes, who, at his request, honoured the concert by his presence.

The concert went off well, even amidst the first singers of the Opera, engaged at a monstrous expense, the connoisseurs gave Aigline a preference. Nor was I without my share of praise. At the concert I first saw Lord Chanceley, a thin, rather low, knock-kneed young man, with light hair and whiskers, and a countenance tolerably handsome. But when Aigline said that all his ideas were absorbed in the study of the great original, Lord Beletrieve, she by no means exaggerated ; and if his imitation was less grotesque than Mr. Money-

more's, it was because his youth and appearance were naturally graceful.

The next three months were passed in a constant round of gaiety. The Tennants were classed among the *élites*, and I was received as Sir Roger Deerhurst's grandson and heir; I taking no pains to contradict a belief so flattering to my vanity, and which won for me the attention of the Vilmont family. I was his Lordship's young relative, of whom he was so proud, that I received many hints that the hand of either of the three Miss Vilmonts was at my command. Nay, Aigline said, that as Lord Vilmont was an influential person, probably he had it in contemplation to bring in an Act to prove the propriety of my marrying the three sisters. Certainly, the rather tight-laced morality which had influenced him to refuse the smallest assistance to the orphans of his predecessor was quite lost in respect for the reputed heir; but the knowledge of his heartless cruelty to them was never forgotten by me.

I sometimes dined with Lord Beletrieve—no small distinction. I was perfectly charmed with his palace: it was a very temple of luxury and refinement. He had but a few pictures and statues, but they were of the finest execution. I remarked that all the latter wore drapery.

"Mr. Deerhurst," he replied, "I belong to the old school, and by no means approve of introducing undraped figures where ladies are admitted. You smile—mistake me not. I do not allude to what effect they may have on morals—morals do not belong to my function,—the refinement of passion does. A woman should be as delicate as the sensitive plant, shrinking from all that is bold or coarse. When she loses this delicacy, her greatest charm is gone. You seem astonished at what I say, but remember, that what we lose in ourselves we exact from others. However, except when I meet with a *rara avis*, like Aigline Tennant, I generally shun an introduction to your young misses. Their insipidity and self-satisfaction offer nothing attractive to my taste; which though founded on epicurean philosophy, nevertheless can be satisfied with nothing short of intellect."

Lord Chanceley went to his seat in Devonshire to make splendid preparations for his nuptials, which were to take place on his return; still he fixed no period for either. About this time, there was an *on dit* circulated, relative to Lord Belletrieve, which excited a sensation. A pretty Florentine of rank, imbibing some taste for the stage, eloped from her friends, and appeared at the

Italian Opera, in London. Her *début* was crowded to excess, but she proved a failure. She had a sweet voice, but no compass ; a lovely form, but no dignity or dramatic powers. The poor Italian was in despair. In this extremity, numerous admirers arose to offer her protection. Strange to say, she gave Lord Beletrieve the preference, and loved him in all sincerity. Fifteen months she dwelt beneath his roof, when she was seized with fever. He then, in defiance of the attendant physician, had her removed.

"My Lord," exclaimed the doctor, "if removed in this state, I cannot answer for her life. In such a house as this, there is no fear of infection."

"Bah !" answered his Lordship ; "I never thought of infection. But if the signora die here, I shall fancy it a charnel-house."

Well, she was removed—died ; and next day, speaking on the subject, he remarked :

"On the whole, I congratulate myself. Poor Mélanche (so she was called), was so determined, like the poet's Melancholy, in 'marking me for her own' that I should have found a difficulty in shaking her off, and I began to tire of her. In fact, she was embarrassing me—death has settled the business satisfactorily."

Aigline was quite indignant when this circum-

stance reached her ; and with good feeling regretted my intimacy with his Lordship. I retorted, and she then replied sadly :

“Freville, we are both rushing swiftly into ruin. One difference, however, exists between us ; though I have not courage to retreat, I see and feel my danger ; whereas, you are self-deceived,—it may be, wilfully so.”

“Nay, Aigline, you are severe, and the most prejudiced person I ever met.”

“I believe you are right,” she answered ; “but I dislike him so utterly, that sometimes as he hangs over me, with his fixed smile, I feel a perfect revulsion of my blood, and then I have a presentiment that he is the ruler of my destiny. And oh ! surely if he is, it must be evil, for no good could spring from him, the mocker of all that is sacred. Wonder not then at my great regret at seeing you so completely under his influence : even my father, in general so little observant, was startled yesterday at the freedom of some of your opinions. Oh ! Freville, wild and thoughtless as I am, from the inmost recesses of my soul I reverence virtue. My marriage with Lord Chanceley is the charm which shall dissolve my present enchantment, and then you shall see me act up to my amiable mother’s precepts. Alas ! that I ever deviated from them ! One great difference, Freville, exists

between you and me,—you are rushing blindly forward on your career ; whereas, I see and tremble at my danger, and still, as if bound by some talismanic power, have not strength to escape. Freville, it was my folly which first introduced you to Lord Beletrieve, and should you suffer in morals or happiness, I never can forgive myself."

"Is my happiness then so dear to you, Aigline ?" I repeated with emotion.

"Psha ! this is nonsense," she answered, as she rushed from the apartment.

The following week we went to the theatre ; Mr. Tennant accompanied us every instant ;—in an under voice, for she did not wish her father to know her dislike to Lord Beletrieve—Aigline congratulated herself on his Lordship's absence. She certainly looked exquisitely beautiful and happy. More than once she whispered, "Methinks, Freville, that even the air of this heated theatre appears as fresh as early spring, when it is not polluted with the Beletrieve presence."

"And with so strong a prejudice," I answered, "why did you ever admit his acquaintance, and why do you not now decline it ? Really, Aigline, this inconsistency looks like affectation."

"Why did I ever admit his acquaintance ! to that question, I positively cannot give any satis-

could not afterwards shake him
attempt he made, the old man st
to him. Now I am just in the sa
in my ignorance or vanity I let
assume a command over me, an
cast it off, though I pledge you
made several attempts; nay, m
covered my sentiments, and th
conquering my dislike teaches hi
with a pertinacity truly alarming.

“Are you afraid he will strangl
I demanded, smiling.

“Figuratively! if I do not
strangle my character and crush i

On our return from the theatre
Lord Chanceley had called at p
left word, for Miss Tennant, that
arrived, but that being impatient t
waived all ceremony. We regret
absent, but Aigline was much plea

but when the heart is deeply interested on any subject, it is apt to get suspicious and doubtful."

Again on the following morning Lord Chanceley called. Aigline, who was at her toilet, for it was before our very late breakfast, sent to request he would wait, as she would be down in a few minutes.

"Tell her," he replied, "that what makes me up so early, is, that I received a note from Lord Beletrieve, requesting me to breakfast with him; however, I shall again call in the course of the day, as I am all impatience to see her."

Concluding Lord Chanceley would not wish for interruption during his visit, I took one of Mr. Tennant's horses and rode off to Hampton Court, to execute a commission for him with a friend. It was a beautiful afternoon, and I was easily prevailed upon to spend the day, so I did not return to London until a late hour, near midnight. I inquired for Miss Tennant; understanding she had retired to rest, I was following her example, when Mr. Tennant, looking fearfully ill and excited, came out of the drawing-room and requested that I would remain, as he had much to say; I readily consented. Closing the door he exclaimed:

"Freville, here is a most unfortunate business. Aigline in expectation of Lord Chanceley not

only remained at home all day, but wrote a note expressive of her joy at his return, and regretted that she had missed seeing him when he was so obliging as to call, and requested the pleasure of his company to dinner. To prevent the possibility of any mistake relative to his receiving it, I drove myself to the hotel, saw his servant, who assured me that when his Lordship was going out he had said 'I mean to dine with the Tennants, probably we shall go to the Opera, so be in readiness.' All this was what might be expected, so I returned to acquaint Aigline and give orders; then not to interrupt her expected *tête-à-tête*, drove out.

"On returning to dinner I found Lord Chanceler had not called. Poor Aigline was trembling with disappointment and excitement,—I much fear she is attached to him;—well, we waited dinner until past ten, then dismissed it untouched; another half hour elapsed, and I was going to call to inquire if he had received Aigline's note, when a waiter from the hotel arrived with one to me from his Lordship, in which he commenced with an elaborate apology for not having sent an earlier answer to my invitation for dinner; regretted he could not accept it, but, all things considered, he thought it in better taste not to do so, as he found his uncle refused to grant his consent to his union with Miss Tennant. He would not wound

my feelings by repeating his uncle's unanswerable objections ; he considered doing so would be in bad taste ; and he added, that ere I received his note he should be on his way to the continent, where he would continue for a year or two, or until Miss Tennant was married, since after the publicity of his admiration, though happily it did not compromise his honour,—as he never could form an engagement without his uncle's consent,—he thought it would be in bad taste to meet her, which must be the case if he continued in London. He concluded his heartless, insolent rejection of my daughter, by requesting that I would present his best regards and compliments to her. So much, Freville, for the bad taste of this contemptible sprig of nobility !”

I was at a loss for an answer to soothe Mr. Tennant, who positively looked half distracted, so I muttered something about Aigline having had a good escape from such a fop, and then with a happy contradiction said, perhaps, after a time, his uncle may consent.

“ Psha !” he answered indignantly, “ the uncle is a mere subterfuge to soften down his unmanly desertion of a girl he so ardently sought ; the only uncle he has is a step-uncle on his mother's side, who has no authority or influence over him ; and the only part of his letter that is true is that

respecting his departure. He left London in a chariot and four before one this day, and ordered his note to me not to be delivered till past ten in the afternoon."

"Fool!" he exclaimed, after a pause, "did he think it necessary to fly from my beautiful daughter who, in all but the vain and artificial institutes of society, is far his superior. Heaven, how I lessened her and myself when I sacrificed the truly respectable in pursuit of the false glare of fashion! But I am severely punished." He sighed deeply and then continued, "The step I wished to take was to challenge Lord Chanceley, but Aigline suffered torture from the very idea; first, she says, waiving to her the dearest of all considerations—my safety, it would only give publicity to her mortification; and next, if Lord Chanceley wished to shirk out of the duel, a very probable suggestion, for most villains are cowards, he could do so on the pretence that a patrician would be disgraced by a meeting with a shipwright." A laugh of scorn almost amounting to a convulsion, distorted Tennant's countenance as he spoke these words, and he continued for some time struggling to regain composure.

I then took an opportunity of pressing on him the justice of Aigline's remarks, and the folly of thinking of pursuing Lord Chanceley to the continent with a challenge. I argued that the best

plan would be to appear as much as possible in public, observing that in a week or two the London season would be at its height, and that although Aigline's engagement had been much spoken of, still in Lord Chanceley's absence the subject would be soon forgotten, for with her youth, beauty, and accomplishments, she might expect to make even a superior match. He thanked me for my advice, which seemed to soothe his wounded pride. We continued up conversing till a late hour. He then retired to rest looking very sad but more tranquil. I must have been callous to all good feeling if I had not sympathized in the Tennants' disappointment, and I watched impatiently for an interview with Aigline.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE following morning I entered the parlour earlier than usual. Mr. Tennant out, and Aigline, I understood, had order in the music room ; there I followed, and gently at the door playfully demanded, " I come in ? "

" Oh ! certainly, Freville," she answered, smiling at it.

I observed she was much flushed, and her eyes actually sparkled like brilliants.

" Sit down," she said, pointing to the seat, " till we talk over my rejection : perhaps though I foresaw its probability, and source.—I am mortified beyond endurance."

She answered passionately, "Really, Freville, you provoke me. So many months in London, entering into its dissipation, and still remaining in your pastoral style? Never was there so incongruous a being: why you might as well expect to see flowers spring up in the middle of Bond Street, as love among the Beletrieve set. If such a *lusus naturæ* occurred, both flowers and love would be instantly crushed."

"Then, Aigline, if you were ever so angry, I cannot feel as deeply for the wounds of mortified vanity as I would for those of true affection; and much as I despise Lord Chanceley, I do not half so much condemn his desertion."

"Admirable speech, Freville! Your wisdom has but one fault—you do not exercise it in your own case, but let us not quarrel on the subject. I believe I am in a bad humour, so excuse me. As to blaming Lord Chanceley, who ever thought of that but my father? Not I, surely; I never was deceived. Did I not, from the beginning, assure you that his attachment to me merely originated in the admiration I elicited from others, and that my fate was in Lord Beletrieve's hands? You thought me fanciful, but the result has proved my discernment."

"Is it possible," I demanded, "that Lord Beletrieve has interfered?"

“Unquestionably,” she answered, “and only that it might encroach too much on your time, I would explain the diplomatic manner in which his Lordship persuaded, or rather tempted my worthy lover, Lord Chanceley, to desert me.”

“Aigline, interested as I am in all that concerns you, how can you speak of my time ; it is never better engaged than when attending to matters which affect your welfare.”

“It is kindly said, Freville, more particularly as I have been somewhat petulant ; but this disappointment to my hopes grieves me to the soul. If it was a vain ambition to look forward with pleasure to be a Countess, I admit the impeachment ; yet that is not my deepest regret ; but the enchantment Lord Beletrieve has cast around me cannot now be broken. I both dislike and fear that man, and as much as you are pleased with him, you will admit I have reason, when I explain how he broke off my match. In the first place, Freville, you must remember what I have before mentioned, that my attendant, Ellen, is sister to Pat Mulcahy, who by his cajoling Irish flattery, ready wit, and obliging temper, has become such a favourite with Lord Beletrieve that he attends him at breakfast and lunch ; in short, though not his valet, he is always about his person. It appears that although Lord Beletrieve never spoke

of my engagement with Lord Chanceley, and in his happy manner always eluded the subject, from the commencement he watched its progress, and when it was mentioned at the club or elsewhere, gave his inimitable shrug or odious sneer,—the first expressive of doubt, the latter of scorn. Though aware of his power, and from some motive—to me at least impenetrable—resolved that I should not be married to Lord Chanceley, he took no steps to prevent our union, but must have been on the watch; for last night, while we were at the theatre, Lord Chanceley arrived from Devon, and, as you already know, called here instantly. This was reported to Lord Beletrieve, who wrote him an invitation to an early breakfast on the following morning. The note was sent by Pat, who first posted off to acquaint Ellen, and who met Lord Chanceley just returning from this house, and heard him mutter, ‘Rather unfortunate, I hoped to spend the morning with Aigline’—however, he accepted the invitation. Still everything proves that he had returned from Devon full of our union, and apparently more impatiently in love than ever; but the heart of a fool is as empty as his head. So much for my preface, Freville: let us now enter Lord Beletrieve’s *boudoir*, in which he seldom receives male visitors, and I may say, *en passant*, that it is consi-

dered to be one of the most unique and luxuriously fitted up apartments in London. Wrapped in a Polish pelisse of puce coloured satin, a furred with sables,—for in spite of the heat of the weather the morning air blew too fresh for his exhausted frame,—Lord Beletrieve reclined on a splendid couch, his gouty foot supported on an embroidered cushion, near to which, on another but of larger dimensions, rested his two pet Blenheims, Sappho and Anacreon, their eyes fixed on his Lordship's face, and their long ears cocked to watch his pleasure. Near to him stood a table of ebony and silver, with its rich appointments of Sèvres china and gold plate; and a few steps beyond, on his left knee, knelt Pat, while on his right he supported a massive tray covered with the more substantial viands to woo his Lordship's sickly appetite, which, like the lean kine of Pharaoh's dream, shrank and withered almost to loathing amid the offered abundance. At the other side of the couch was placed a large table covered with papers, pamphlets, and periodicals; over this the full light was admitted to fall, for to observe, in the rest of the apartment it was allayed by the rose-coloured curtains so as to suit his Lordship's faded complexion. At this table sat a youth of an interesting appearance, whose occupation was to read out paragraphs from the

papers or books. One more object is worthy of observation, a fine Newfoundland dog of the larger size, called Rochester, kept guard at the door, and never admitted any person to enter without his master's command, and in his absence was so ferocious that Blue Beard's wife, with all her curiosity, would not have dared to approach. As the hour appointed for Lord Chanceley's coming was much earlier than Lord Beletrieve's usual one for rising, Pat observed the compressing of his brow, and the peevish pish, as he turned over with his fork the delicacies he could not enjoy—more violent symptoms of anger he was too refined to display. At that instant a deep growl from Rochester announced approaching steps.

"'Is that Chanceley?' his Lordship called out languidly. An affirmative was given. 'Here, Rochester, let him in.' The dog obeyed, and Lord Chanceley entered, but started as Rochester stood before him.

"'No fear, Chanceley,' exclaimed Lord Beletrieve, 'you are an expected guest; but I have such a perfect horror of intrusion, that I take every means to guard against it.

"'Do you know, Chanceley,' said his Lordship, as he observed the keen appetite with which he discussed the delicacies, 'I almost envy you having

sojourn in the country might be useful
life we Cosmopolites lead is not here
require renovation.'

"Chanceley stopped eating to reply.
Beletrieve continued :

" 'I understand that you have a
lodge on the south coast of Devonshire
you have lately fitted it up in good taste,
gentlemanly taste, though some
would have disputed the point. But
the lodge, could you let me have it for
two—your own terms—or if you did
me an incumbrance, and had no objection
that my going might interfere with
gladly accompany you there as a visitor,
certainly it would be against my usual habit
general I hate to be a visitor,—home
for me ; but, Chanceley, when you are
there is no sacrifice, for you are an
easy, and a most agreeable companion

poured out a torrent of gratitude for the compliment, adding, 'how honoured he would feel by his company.'

"Then am I to consider the thing settled? How soon shall we set off for Devonshire?" inquired Lord Beletrieve.

"Oh! really, my Lord, I am greatly honoured by your intention of coming to me, and your high opinion of my merits, which, when once known, will at once bring me into distinction, still I venture to solicit you would carry your kindness still further, and have me balloted for at the Cosmopolite Club—one word from your Lordship, and I should be admitted.'

"Of course you would,' haughtily retorted Lord Beletrieve, 'but this is an after consideration; what has it to do with my going to Devonshire?'

"Oh! true, my Lord, but I am so confused, so flattered. Aigline—you admire her so much, you would perhaps rather consider her an acquisition, if not, I can postpone my marriage until after you return. No girl of common delicacy could press a man to hurry his union.'

"With well acted surprise Lord Beletrieve replied: 'Positively, Chanceley, you rave; have you got a fever, or was your *chasse de café* too strong? For myself, I never take one in the

morning. I asked your leave to go to Devonshire either as your tenant or visitor, and you burst forth into a wild rhodomontade about admiration, marriage, and Lord knows what.'

" 'Oh! my Lord, it is quite true; but I am so confused, so miserable till I obtain your full approbation of my taste. Of course had I not been certain of it, I would not have gone so far; if you recollect, I have frequently told you that I had something of the utmost consequence to consult you about, but you always shunned the explanation, and our relationship is so distant, I had no right to press my affairs on your notice.'

" 'Connexion, Lord Chanceley, if you please,' replied Lord Beletrieve, with a sneer; 'but in regard to inattention, of which you seem to complain, forgive me if I say that it must have proceeded from want of tact on your side. It may be that you addressed me while I was discussing my wine, or engaged at whist, or écarté, or flirting with a pretty girl, or soothing the wounded feelings of one unreasonable enough to reproach me for a change of sentiment towards her—the mere result of my constitutional inconstancy. But now I am at leisure to act as confidant: you will not, however, be prolix—the hour for my bath is approaching.'

"After much stammering, blushing, nay, trem-

bling, Lord Chanceley said: 'You must have observed my attention to Miss Tennant, and, if you have not already learned it from report, I wish to acquaint you that I have proposed for her, am accepted, and that I hope we shall soon be united; and, if your Lordship would accompany us to Devonshire, just fitted up for her reception, she and I would do all in our power to amuse you.'

"Without noticing the latter part of the speech, assuming a look of wonder, Lord Beletrieve exclaimed:

"'Chanceley, can you be serious? Propose for Aigline Tennant, the shipbuilder's daughter!'

"Almost electrified, Lord Chanceley cried out:

"'My Lord, it was yourself first introduced her to me!—extolling her so highly, that I concluded you were the intimate friend of her family.'

"'Friend!' emphatically repeated Lord Beletrieve, with his shrug, and look of ineffable scorn.

"With more energy than he seemed capable of, Lord Chanceley continued:

"'Yes, friend; and permit me to say, that it was your notice, and the Prince's admiration, which first attracted me to Miss Tennant: you both said that she was beautiful, and a first-rate musician. Then half the young men in London

spoke in raptures of her, toasted her, danced with her; so I thought if I could obtain her in marriage, I should gain a prize, and that you, my Lord, would approve of my taste, and the Prince perhaps notice her, and say that Lady Chanceley was one of the most beautiful women in England — nay, in spite of her youth, he might fall in love with her. What other motives could have led to my proposal? I am no judge of beauty — almost dislike music, and was a little afraid of Miss Tennant's ready wit; and as to money, I do not require it,' he paused, for want of breath.

“ ‘Be calm—not so vehement,’ said Lord Belotrieve, playfully, ‘all this heat of temper, more particularly when no one disputes your opinion, is in bad taste; and, if known, would for ever exclude you from the Cosmopolite Club. Now, hear my opinion: Aigline Tennant is young, beautiful, accomplished; as to her position, her father was lately a shipbuilder in the city of Cork, in Ireland; as to her wealth, he is squandering it in every direction, for the delectable purpose of forcing himself and his daughter into a society to which they are not entitled, and which is likely to prove as unfortunate, as it is expensive.’

“ ‘Then, as she possesses so many advantages, and as her union with me will give her station,

Perhaps, after all, I was fortunate in my choice,' said Lord Chanceley, timidly.

"Lord Beletrieve raised himself on the couch, and fixing his eyes on Lord Chanceley, in a proud, measured tone, said :

" ' Did *I* ever marry ?—Did I, because I saw many a girl of inferior rank, young, beautiful, and accomplished, think it necessary to raise them to my position ? Can you suppose such a thing possible ? Bah !' and his Lordship took a long pinch of snuff.

" ' I was not aware,' said Lord Chanceley, with a sigh, ' that you had any objection to marriage ; On the contrary, I have heard you speak on the subject as if you considered it as a respectable institution.'

" ' And so I do—for my friends,' said Lord Beletrieve, with his sickly smile. ' Let those who will, enter into the indissoluble bonds of matrimony ; for me, my philosophy refines on pleasure, and, consequently, though no versifier of words, or publisher of rhymes, I am fanciful and classical enough to know that the blaze of Hymen's torch shines so brightly, that the illusions of the imagination disperse before it,—then vanish the Graces, Love flutters awhile, and flies off. To supply their place, enter household economy and prudence, and, to crown, or rather to destroy all

satiety supervenes. Bah !' and he took pinch of snuff. ' Now, Chanceley, the question whether it is better for a man to be respectable or happy.'

" ' The Prince is married !' exclaimed Chanceley, with emotion ; ' and, independent of royalty, he is allowed to be the finest fashionable man in England.'

" ' The Prince *is* married !' reiterated Lord Beletrieve, in a slow, monotonous tone, ' as an illustration of the advantages of marriage. Chanceley, your hits are so piquant, that I must induce you to the Club, as a *bel-esprit* ; yet, if it were as well not ; people might look at Lord Chanceley looking to royalty as his star ! Psha ! but vanity makes fools of us

" ' Good Heaven !' exclaimed Lord Chanceley in a tone of unaffected distress, ' what do I do ? Oh ! that I had known your sentiments even a month since ! I have ordered the pages, jewellery ; fitted up my residences-

" ' All,' interrupted Lord Beletrieve, with a forced laugh, ' for the shipwright's daughter, the bye, Chanceley, will you call the papa, or father ?—I think the former sounds sheepish and affected.'

" ' Lord Beletrieve, do not with your logic drive me out of my reason !' cried Lord Chanceley

'I would rather have all London hold me in contempt than your Lordship.'

"A complacent smile passed over the features of the great prototype of fashion at the sincere devotion of his votary; his self-love was so gratified, that it soothed his caustic humour, and he resolved to carry his point in a gentler manner.

"'Chanceley, how far have you gone in this business? And do you really love the girl, Aigline Tennant?' he inquired.

"'All was settled for our union before I went to Devonshire; but I did not fix the day: first, I was in no hurry, for my bays were not broken in properly, and I had lent some of the diamonds to my dowager aunt, who was in Rome; then there was a delay caused by their re-setting; in short, I wished to introduce my bride with *éclat*, and consequently was resolved not to celebrate our nuptials till all was prepared. As to loving Miss Tennant, I really think I do; indeed, I am quite sure I do,' and as he made the assurance he looked, if possible, more vacant and unmeaning than ever.

"Lord Beletrieve smiled, and his eyes glittered with suppressed laughter, as he said: 'Chanceley, mark my experience; your case is not desperate;

no fever in the blood—no oppression heart: you will survive the loss of Minant.’

“‘That is not the danger I apprehend, Lord Chanceley, with his wisest look; ‘poor girl is desperately in love with me, so, that when I showed her the designs of diamonds and equipages, she scarcely looked at them, saying, ‘My Lord, my ambition is to be your wife; on all the minor preparations I will follow your own taste—what pleases you must have my approval.’”

“‘A very pretty set speech,’ said Lord Chanceley, with a sneer, ‘and better again, she had merely substituted the word I love for wife.’”

“‘If I break off our match, I shall be torn from my soul,’ said Lord Chanceley, with a wistful sigh.

“‘And so shall I,” retorted Lord Bevilston, ‘for the prize of a coronet to one so anxious is a loss not easily supplied. *A-propos*, ‘the ship Tennant builds, we may expect to see the Earl’s coronet in front, and the Chancellor’s flaming on the flag. I hope the fellow will have the impudence to have it on some trading vessel, with a cargo of Munster pigs; only think,

at Wapping, yesterday, the trading vessel, Chanceley, Cargo—Pigs, Master—Tennant.'

"'Damnation!' exclaimed Lord Chanceley, stamping. 'I would hang myself first!'

"'A swinging way of ending your romance,' said Lord Beletrieve; 'as to me I would prefer some gentler method.'

"'Oh, my Lord!' cried Lord Chanceley, in a tone of entreaty, 'if you would deign to assist me out of this infernal scrape, you would confer the greatest obligation.'

"'Excuse me,' he coldly answered, 'but I never intermeddle in other people's business; that, indeed, would be lessening my dignity; but probably some disagreement relative to the settlement may arise to relieve you.'

"'No hope, then!' sighed his Lordship, 'all has been concluded: Mr. Tennant left every thing to my arrangement. I must say that he acted in the most gentlemanly manner.'

"'Thanks to the shipwright,' contemptuously replied Lord Beletrieve, 'so he permitted his patrician son-in-law to manage his own fortune! Certainly love is stupid as well as blind, when you consider his doing so a condescension.'

"'Could your Lordship suggest any other method?' demanded Lord Chanceley.

“Suggest! why, Chanceley, I suggest nothing, I merely remark; and now I think on it, I ought to sympathize with you, for, many years ago, so long that I sincerely wish my mother had postponed my birth some twenty years, in place of which she set the good town of Norwich and its neighbourhood nearly on fire to publish the birth of her heir—never was there such an absurdity! I fell desperately in love with a pretty maiden, a baronet’s daughter. She proved willing, arrangements for our marriage were being prepared, I went to the races of Ascot, and saw a prettier girl, at least a more novel one. I changed my mind about the first, and candidly told her friends so. Well, her brother challenged me; we fought; I got a slight graze of his ball across my left shoulder; I then fired my pistols in the air seconds interfered; I explained my constitutional inconstancy; the brother saw his folly,—we shook hands, and I retired from the field freed from the incumbrance of a wife, and crowned with laurels as a duellist.’

“Lord Chanceley’s agitation increased, he paced up and down, then turning to Lord Beletrieve, exclaimed:—‘I am not a duellist, I condemn it on principle.’

“‘On what principle, may I ask?’ retorted Lord Beletrieve.

"'On many,' exclaimed Lord Chanceley; 'and then I am a bad shot, and Mr. Tennant is an excellent one, for one day when we sailed down to Greenwich, just for his amusement he was firing at some sea-gulls, and brought as many as he fancied down, whereas, I could not hit one.'

"'If he is so clever at knocking down gulls, you certainly would be in danger, and do perfectly right to avoid him,' drily answered Lord Beletrieve; 'and fear being a principle not easily overcome, I conclude I may as well now pay you my congratulations on your marriage. It is probable, when once it takes place, I shall not see much of you.'

"Saying these words, he rose from the couch, and, addressing the youth, who sat near the table, said, 'See if my bath is in readiness.'

"'For Heaven's sake, Lord Beletrieve, do not retire till you help me out of this scrape,' cried Chanceley. 'I repeat that it was your admiration of Miss Tennant which first led me on. Last night I supped with some of the Guards, and mentioned my engagement. Several of them toasted her, saying she was the loveliest girl in England; and Denby, and Morely said they always thought you would be the happy man, as you seemed quite devoted to her: positively at the time I was so

“ ‘That I am a damned
tunate fellow.’

“ ‘No contradiction, Ch
you mean to do?’

“ ‘Alas! I fear I have
by honour’

“ ‘Honour and a shipwri
Beletrieve.

“ ‘Oh! my Lord,’ he
able, so experienced, that
could assist me.’

“ ‘Impossible, Chanceley
between a pretty clever gir
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duelling is abhorrent to your
uncle or guardian, it would
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interference of a fat

"Pish!" exclaimed Lord Beletrieve, as he muttered, 'what an incorrigible logger-headed fool!'" then aloud he said, 'Chanceley, other young men so entangled as you are would be quite satisfied with making use of the uncle's name, and, having written a letter of regret on his interference to the lady's guardian or father, if she had one, would be off to the continent, and so avoid explanations, challenges, &c., and—but I trust you have too much honour to act that way by the shipwright's daughter,' and he gave a scornful laugh. At the instant his valet entered to attend him to the bath. 'One word more, my Lord,' cried out Lord Chanceley.

"Excuse me, but I have already innovated on my usual habits, so good bye, and when I am gone have a care of Rochester, he is as fond of tricks, and as dangerous as his celebrated namesake. Here, Rochester, show Lord Chanceley out."

"This was said sarcastically; the well-trained dog wagged his tail, growled, then looked so fierce that, making a hasty salute, his Lordship hurried from the apartment.

"Freville," added Aigline, with a sigh, "so closed the scene that ended my projected marriage. From my father you have learned the manner in which Lord Chanceley, acting upon Lord Bele-

trieve's hints, threw me off. Would I never had been engaged to him, for I fear his jilting me in so cold a manner will prove a serious disadvantage."

"Aigline, can all this be true? And can the word of a servant be relied on? Does it appear probable that Lord Beletrieve would speak in this confidential manner before domestics likely to repeat what he said?"

"It is quite in character with his incalculable vanity. He feels that he is on the decline, and he is proud of every circumstance or report which proves his influence, even over fools. The tribute formerly offered to him by love or admiration, he now commands by fear. What mother who wants to marry her daughters will not try to conciliate him, or what girl not listen to his fulsome flattery, if by so doing she could turn aside his well-practised weapon of scorn? No; every word I repeated is correctly true, and I only rejoice that my honourable-minded, though not titled father, remains in ignorance of what I have confided to you."

"There, Aigline, I quite differ with you. I think you should fully acquaint him with the circumstance, and tell him never again to admit Lord Beletrieve; indeed, I think none of us should acknowledge him."

She gave her merry laugh, as with her usual vivacity she exclaimed :

"Positively, Freville, you are *distrain*. What ? Show the man of highest fashion in England, the companion of Princes, 'the admired of all admirers,' our proud indignation ? Shut our door against him, and shun his acquaintance ? Who would do this ? Mr. Tennant and his pretty daughter, the *nouveaux riches*, the Paddies from Cork ! Excellent ; why it would be like the fly on the lion's mane, with this difference, the noble lion would not crush the fly, but the noble Lord Beletrieve would hold us up as objects of derision."

"You speak," said I, angrily, "as if you were pigmies, and he a giant."

"And such in the hemisphere of fashion are our relative positions," she replied.

"Then quit it, dear Aigline. Remember how cheerful and admired you were in Cork ; how happy and respected your father was ; and now, if with your increase of wealth you returned, you would be esteemed of the first consequence."

"Your remarks appear just," she answered, sadly : "but I feel the impossibility of either my father or myself following your advice."

"And why so, Aigline ? What prevents your going to Ireland ?"

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CHAPTER IX.

PREVIOUSLY to Lord Chanceley's departure, Mr. Tennant had sent out cards for a dinner-party. Lord Beletrieve promised to come, and, as usual, all was arranged under his auspices; not only Aigline but Mr. Tennant looked forward to this party as an event of consequence. "It will," she observed, "determine the line of society, and how far Lord Chanceley's insolent desertion has injured me." As the day approached, Mr. Tennant's anxiety increased, for he heard that a hundred reports had been circulated to his disadvantage by Lord Chanceley's friends; but what wounded him most was the sarcasms thrown out about his having been a shipwright, and the soubriquet, the mechanic's pretty daughter, being attached to Aigline, who, to soothe him, affected to laugh, and be amused, though she was seriously annoyed.

"You go to the Opera this evening with Lady

Mainstoun?" said Mr. Tennant to Aigline, as they sat at dinner.

"I hope so," she replied; "there is a new pi coming out; it was so arranged by her La ship last week."

A few moments after, a servant entered say, that Lady Mainstoun presented comments, and regretted she could not call for Mr Tennant.

Mr. Tennant looked miserable. Aigline loured, but, smiling, turned to him, saying,

"Dear father, I have got the music of the opera, so cheer up; and if you remain at home Freville and I will practise it for you. I least, can feel no regret."

He kissed her forehead, exclaiming, "lovely, beloved child, I should have been your guardian; but, influenced by a weak pride, I led you into danger. Should your happiness suffer, I shall be miserable beyond expression."

She answered affectionately, and they spent evening cheerfully enough. Thursday morning as we sat at breakfast, Mr. Tennant received a note: opening it, he read,

"Lord Beletrieve regrets he cannot have the pleasure of dining with Mr. Tennant."

"Thursday, 9th."

"This is most unfortunate," he said, as he handed it to Aigline.

"Still, we might have expected it," she replied; "is he not laid up with the gout?"

"No, Aigline," he answered, "for I saw him yesterday riding in St. James's Park with the Prince. The awkward part of the business is, that at his instigation I invited Lord Proudly and Colonel Arganza, two of the haughtiest men in England, and who, I understand, before they sent their answers, inquired particularly whether Lord Beletrieve would come. Now in our rank of life, the forms of good breeding must be observed; but when we are mad enough to run after the aristocracy, if they are annoyed, there is no check to their insolence."

"My dear father, do not be uneasy about Colonel Arganza and Lord Proudly. Just half an hour before dinner they will send their excuses."

"Impossible," he answered, petulantly, "it would be unlike gentlemen."

"Yes," said Aigline, "but it would be stylish, a mark of self-consequence, to show a perfect indifference to the convenience or feelings of others. In short, it would be fashionable."

The event proved Aigline's discernment. Just as dinner was announced, excuses, for they

"Impossible, my dear father," she answered. Then turning to me, in an under tone said, "**Fre-**ville, mark me, Lord Beletrieve has some **scheme** in wishing to overwhelm us with mortifications. Still, all my woman's wit, as papa terms it, **cannot** fathom his object."

"Aigline," called out Mr. Tennant, "his **Lord-**ship was a great admirer of this little enamelled painting of Jeptha's daughter, though very **valu-**able, and I am loath to part with it, still, if you think he would receive it as a **compliment**, and call to return thanks, I would give you **per-**mission to send it to him."

She replied with vivacity, "Not for worlds, **my** dear father. In our graspings after fashion **we** have parted with sufficient treasure not to **cast** away such a beautiful gem. That, however, **would** not deter me so much as the triumph to his **vanity** after so wantonly injuring us; so do not think of it."

"What do you mean?" he answered **angrily**. "To what injury do you allude? Nay, do not **look** so distressed; you were thinking of that **fool** Chanceley. My dear child, you should have **too** much spirit to cast away a thought on such **a** passionless, vapid coxcomb."

She blushed with confusion at her own **giddi-**ness; then, to divert his thoughts from the **sub-**ject, started up, exclaiming,

"I have just thought of a plan that may win back Lord Beletrieve; at all events, if it fail, though there is some flattery, there is no meanness in it. So saying, she approached the writing-table, and in a few moments returned with a note, elegantly written, and directed to Lord Beletrieve.

"You must read it to me," said Mr. Tennant, with a smile. She obeyed.

"Miss Tennant's compliments to Lord Beletrieve, having just received from Paris some music as yet not published in London, which she thinks will suit his Lordship's taste, would feel gratified by his fixing a day to accompany her with his violoncello, and hopes he will excuse her making this request; but independent of the pleasure of his company, parts of the music are so difficult that she could not execute them without his assistance."

"Shall I send it, papa?" she demanded.

"Certainly, my love, it may succeed, and can do no possible injury." So saying, he quitted the apartment.

"Do not, Aigline," I cried impetuously. "What possible advantage can you gain by the society of Lord Beletrieve, to compensate for thus paying

court to one, who as you justly remarked, tonly destroyed your prospects with Lord (ley, besides being the cause of the slig have since received ? Then it is not treati father well to keep him in ignorance an him to entertain in hospitality one who s enemy's part. Really, Aigline, you a vokingly inconsistent. You say that you presentiment this man will draw evil on y now that you have escaped his influen are trying to attract him back. I h patience--"

"Nor I with you, Freville," she gail rupted ; "you are so ridiculously contra Whenever I found fault with Lord Be you were wont to quarrel with me, and no I wish to conciliate him, you are in a de passion. Certes, you men are very un able."

"No, Aigline, the fault is yours. I thought your dislike fanciful, I took his si question ; but his interference between Lord Chanceley proves to a demonstrati in spite of his bland manner, he is as ill- and interfering as an old maid ; except, what I strongly suspect, that being despe love, he has resolved to propose, when, accc the opinion of the worthies of all ages, str

are admissible. Besides, Aigline, when united to you, he becomes the arbiter of your destiny; thus you will not only be a lady bright, but an inspired prophetess."

"Never shall I be Lady Beletrieve," she hastily answered: "first, because his Lordship would not disarrange his bachelor habits by the introduction of a wife; next, powerful as I admit ambition, nature is still more unconquerable, and I absolutely loathe Lord Beletrieve."

"Come, come, Aigline, no affectation. You held Lord Chanceley in contempt, and still would have married him."

"Yes, Freville, but that sentiment is more easily conquered—subdued, I should say."

"Did not the Melanche, of whose death you told me, reside with Lord Beletrieve?" I demanded.

"Certainly, but the position of a wife is far different. He owed poor Melanche no duty, no respect. None of his self-consequence was to be supported by her. The moment he was weary of the connexion he could dissolve it; there was no tie to prevent him, and, as the event proved, no honour or feeling; but, thanks to England, her christianity and laws, a wife cannot be so treated, no, not by the greatest profligate."

"Then if you really have no design to lure his

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arm and looking archly in my face, "Mr. La Franck, your pedagogue, was wont to say that every woman found a ready excuse for her misdemeanours by proving that her neighbours committed greater. Now your observations testify that the ingenuity of self-defence more properly belongs to you lords of the creation. However, being resolved on this question to have my own way, I shall no further argue the point."

With these words, she hastily rang the bell. Guessing her purpose was to send the note, I tried to snatch it, but she sportively escaped from my grasp, and, ere I was aware of her intention, bounded out of the room, locking me in. There was no being angry with one so beautiful, so I quietly submitted to the imprisonment. In about an hour she released me, observing that, her note having been delivered, my interference was useless; and to restore my good humour, she proposed going to the music room. Though still assuming displeasure, I obeyed, and as she sat down to the piano, brought over the violoncello—which, by the way, was a remarkable fine instrument.

"Oh! no, Freville, have mercy, and bring your flute; for should Lord Beletrieve obey my request and come, how could I ever endure his scrape after your master-touch?"

"And yet," I exclaimed, indignantly, "in **your** note you complimented his knowledge of **music**. How can you stoop to such flattery?"

She replied: "The fault lies with your **own** sex, Freville, who never can be managed **without** it. I never saw one of you care for a **guileless**, simple-minded girl. What woman dares point **out** a man's faults until she is married to him? **And** then, oh! then he is not spared. However, **let** us commence this opera."

We had scarcely done so when the door **was** thrown open, and Lord Beletrieve **was** announced. We both started, and I whispered Aigline:

"Your flattery succeeded."

She smiled, and blushing deeply, **advanced** to meet his Lordship, who, in spite of his **air** of gallantry, looked ill and languid. Still **his** manner was both dignified and gentle, as **he** said:

"Miss Tennant, I felt so obliged by your **note**, that though I had promised to accompany **the** Prince to Windsor, I declined the honour to **have** the pleasure of answering it personally."

She expressed her gratitude. I then **stepped** forward and would have spoken, but **affecting** **to** be angry he waived me off, saying:

"Mr. Deerhurst, I am really offended. **Ten** days confined to my room, and for the last **seven**"

ven called to inquire after me. Is that
treat your friends?"

y enough I stammered out my apolo-
were gracefully accepted; then his
his happy manner, told all the on
Court. While we were thus engaged,
it entered. Lord Beletrieve saluted
fectionately, saying:

nnant, as the only excuse for Mr.
neglect, I shall expect on Friday next
(Tuesday) that he will dine with me,
few particular friends; perhaps you
obliging as to join us."

tified, Mr. Tennant accepted the invi-
en turning to Aigline he continued, in
anner:

ennant, I do not include you; but,
ht be offended at the exclusion, will
ert expressly for your amusement.

Mr. Tennant, except you can play
must forbid your entrance."

nant, who never saw through the
throwing him off in a polite way,
ing that he could play the violin
ell, when Lord Beletrieve carelessly

r. Tennant, you do not play the harp,
to have the honour of your company

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for her reason. A little

"I am quite exhausted
refreshments?"

"Certainly," said A
stepped out to order the

"Not one song have
Beletrieve, leading Aigli
arranged her music he
manner, "Do you know
some idea of going to
time to conquer my cold
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Aigline, that however she
have fallen into a mental
Chanceley is the most insi

She coloured violently,
the keys but she —

to my concert : it is given expressly for you, Aigline, and I shall not admit a single bore—all shall be worthy of its fair inspiration.”

There was no resisting such flattery, she thanked him with animation.

“By the way, Aigline,” he observed, “how came it that Mr. Tennant’s last dinner was a failure ? These circumstances, however trivial they appear, have their influence. Beautiful as you are, Aigline, it would not do *just now* to have you out of fashion, so, positively, you must have a ball ;—observe, it must be very exclusive, none but persons of the first fashion shall be admitted. To-morrow I will call to arrange the music for my concert : you, Aigline, shall be my *prima donna*, then we can conclude on the ball ; so prepare to be very industrious next week ; numberless lists, notes, and orders are to be written.” He rose to take leave.

“My Lord, will you not wait for the refreshments ?”—at the moment they entered, and Mr. Tennant followed.

“Just a jelly, and a glass of Constantia,” he answered. Then to me, he said, “Mr. Deerhurst, should we not cite Miss Tennant for a witch ? In her presence, every thing is forgotten, even thirst and hunger ; and now, farewell.”

As Mr. Tennant opened the door for him, he

said, "I have advised your daughter to give ball, it is quite indispensable; of course you will engage the first artists to make the necessary preparations. I expect that the ball will be one of the most select and brilliant of the season. I wish, Mr. Tennant, your dancing room was some twenty feet longer; however, on the whole, your house is admirably well fitted up. By the bye, Aigline," again advancing towards her, "to-morrow evening you must go to the Opera. My box I regret to say, is engaged to some of my country friends,—a sad bore these same country friends! however, you can go with Lady Mainstoun."

Aigline again blushed deeply, and was stammering out an excuse, when interrupting her, he rejoined, "I know what you would say of her neglect, rudeness, and so forth; but you had better make a convenience of that trifling woman, who may be classed with the ephemerals of society. However, to soothe your Irish pride, she shall call on you, and as an *amende honorable* request your company as a favour. And observe, my dear little girl, to be perfectly elegant you must conquer this quick sense of injury, these fancied slights to your dignity, this trembling sensibility to the thousand mortifications to which all who would rise above their sphere are ever subject:

bah! it is much ado about nothing." With these words, accompanied by smiles and shrugs, he bowed his adieus, and hurried down stairs. This time he had the lameness in his left leg. Aigline touching my arm whispered :

"Freville, I tremble for your tendon achilles; you positively must be lame for my ball."

"What ball are you all talking of?" demanded Mr. Tennant staring.

"Papa, Lord Beletrieve insists upon my giving one; he says there is no other method for my re-entering fashionable life."

"I tell you," said Mr. Tennant, "all these expenses would ruin a larger fortune than mine; however, as Lord Beletrieve says it, of course it *must* be; but, Aigline, remember, when—as your *fashionables* term it—the season ends, we quit London for ever."

Aigline rejoined with vivacity, "Before the next opens, our very existence will be forgotten. And thus, Freville," she added in an under tone, "we shall by oblivion escape the sneers and sarcasms of our London friends, the only meed of our folly and extravagance. Did you observe how his Lordship inadvertently let out, that he had watched all my movements? How could he otherwise know of Lady Mainstoun's put off about the Opera; or that our dinner was a failure? I tell

tone.

"The two former," sibilities; so adieu, for waiting."

* *

Lord Beletrieve's dinner exactly as he wished; tivation, the latter with tended by the Prince and was for the time being ship, for he was too passionate motive, to humiliate he invited a few men of patronage, to meet Mr. T. rank or fashion that day not amidst royalty had been more gracefully; and with acquire, he at once disposition, which, however superior

classed him among my set, for he is one of the cleverest men I ever met, and quite vain enough for a Cosmopolite."

Such was his Lordship's qualified praise ; but, indeed, it was usual whenever he spoke well of any person to conclude his remarks by some sarcasm.

Aigline's ball was the next event of interest. In spite of the agitation she suffered, lest her noble acquaintances should even at the last hour pour in apologies, and after all the splendid preparations and vast expence, lest her party should prove a failure, she looked exquisitely beautiful. Lord Beletrieve arrived early, as he expressed it, to review the apartments, and the supper, and the fair hostess. All met his approbation, and he stood near Aigline as she received her guests. This lessened my pleasure, for being less excited and engaged than either she or her father, I perceived that it awakened much observation, evinced by sneers and whispers. As Mr. Tennant afterwards observed, politeness was by no means practised by the Beletrieve clique. However, I reconciled my mind to the annoyance by the persuasion that she would be Lady Beletrieve. Ambition and vanity, I thought, were idols, and at their shrine she will sacrifice herself to a man she detests. However, it is but the exchange of

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at Mr. Tennant's, somet
at others, but for a few i
not come, he usually se

"Freville, though Lord Beletrieve must certainly propose for Aigline, she has too much sensibility and principle ever to unite herself to a man considerably older than her father, and of such libertine principles."

Yet by some strange and inexcusable infatuation he took no steps to check the intimacy. Indeed, from the period of his unexpected wealth and Mrs. Tennant's death, his whole conduct had been a tissue of folly. Good-natured and generous to enthusiasm, he was as unsuspicious and guileless as a child. Perfectly adoring Aigline, he humoured her in all her follies, and unreflectingly exposed her to every danger. Even his admitting me to be the inmate of his house, her sole and intimate companion, was a criminal neglect of his duty.

From this period, though I still continued a votary of the Beletrieve system, I no longer worshipped its great original. Independent of his treachery towards the Tennants, he did not improve on intimacy; and as I discovered that he entertained a jealousy of Aigline, and that his motive in exerting himself about my commission was to separate her from my society, I felt the less grateful. In addition to this, although the bland smile seldom quitted his rigid lips, and the mellowed tones of his voice were never raised in anger,

still, from the refinement of his taste, he was frequently annoyed by trifles ; and then, in despite of his courtly manners, became captious and sarcastic. Of this the following is an instance.

A day or two after the ball, he was sitting in the drawing-room with Aigline and me, for, at her request, I never left them to a *tête-à-tête*. Once or twice she proposed adjourning to the music-room, but he languidly declined, saying he preferred conversation. Consequently, she exerted all her powers to amuse ; he appeared pleased, when the loud knock of a footman was heard—another, and still another succeeded.

“ I can endure this no longer,” he exclaimed, rising, “ it shatters my nerves. Is it not provoking that the peace of a family, nay, of a whole street, is to be disturbed by this vulgar unmeaning custom ? It has not even antiquity to recommend it, for the sound of a horn at a noble’s gate, softened by distance, and the thick walls of a castle fell musically on the ear ; but here in these shells, which we now call houses, up rolls a carriage, down jumps a footman, and then by the aid of a bronzed knocker strikes up a noise that might rouse deaf Lord Wonsley from his slumber. By Heaven, I wish that all who did so had their own brains knocked out !”

He looked fearfully pale and wicked as he spoke,

but, instantly recollecting himself, with his usual mildness, said :—

“Miss Tennant, forgive this coarse expression ; I should have been more guarded in your presence.”

Not a little surprised at his violence, to soothe him she answered :—

“I do not wonder at your Lordship’s displeasure, even my father has often termed it a most injudicious custom. I cannot imagine in what it first originated ; surely a porter would as readily attend to a gentle knock or ring ?”

“Strange enough ! Aigline, the Prince put the same question to me about three or four years ago. He was sitting in my boudoir with Lord Portland and General Sir John Irvine,—the latter allowed to be one of the most finished gentlemen in Europe. We were engaged secretly discussing a political question of the deepest interest, when knock after knock resounded from my door. ‘This noisy interruption is intolerable,’ exclaimed his Royal Highness, with a heat of temper he seldom displayed :—‘Lord Beletrieve, how can a person of your refinement suffer it, and in what folly could such a barbarism have originated ?’ I expressed my ignorance, and, to mark my disapprobation, rang the bell, and ordered my porter

to have the knocker instantly removed. ‘Royal Highness,’ said Sir John Irvine, sn
‘there is a legend attached to the custom
I cannot vouch for its veracity. Some hu
years ago, ages it may be, for the date i
accurate, a blacksmith realized a large for
so he purchased a fine carriage and fine h
and with his golden wand turned his Cyc
into footmen, and wooed and won a noble
for his wife. Now, what availed all this,
neighbours, who had so often heard the
sound of his anvil, did not witness his gran
Day after day he dashed up and down Lu
Hill, where he had formerly resided. Ala
the malice of this world! His neighbours, en
of his prosperity, resolved not to see what
were grieved to know; so whenever the
equipage, with its fine horses and fine lady
by, they all ran from their doors and win
Thus by lessening Smithy’s triumph, they en
his anger, and he swore a big oath, for
had not refined his manners, that his fi
and acquaintance should both see and hea
carriage. With that he called for his coac
and tall footman, and ordered the coachman to
at the door of every person of whom he, Sn
could claim any knowledge, and the footma
descend, and give a thundering knock.

customed to the lusty strokes of the anvil, and as proud as their master of his new chariot, the liveried Cyclopes obeyed. Soon, there was not a person on Ludgate Hill who did not hear and dread the approach of Smithy's equipage. But now, your Royal Highness, in referring to the injury to the peace of society, I come to the saddest part of my legend. The great mass of the people being essentially vulgar, love show and noise. Thus Smithy's example was soon followed on Ludgate Hill; thence it spread to the City, and, strange to say! gradually extended to the West end; and, oh! horror of horrors, the nuisance has become so prevalent that, here, on this day, nay this very hour, within the hallowed sanctuary of Lord Beletrieve's boudoir, your Royal Highness's secret conference has been disturbed. Truly there is something noisy in the state of London!"

"This sally of Sir John Irvine," continued Lord Beletrieve, "which in the repetition seems dull enough, was given with so much humour and dramatic effect as to amuse the Prince. His anger was diverted, and we spent our morning agreeably."

Just as Lord Beletrieve finished speaking, came another succession of knocks; his smile continued, but his pallid brow darkened.

his self-command was lost, and a look of ineffable scorn, which rendered him hideous—it merely crossed his face and vanished—but, as Aigline afterwards had a peep at the cloven foot and was forgotten. Recovering himself he

“Miss Tennant, will you allow me my carriage?”

Abashed by his haughtiness, she said
“Freville, will you be so obliging to take it?”

Lord Beletrieve’s quick eye observed every circumstance which gratified him; his complacency was evident as he rose to depart, he took her hand so I saw her cheek pale—and in a low manner he said:

“Apropos, I have not answered your relative to the knocker; my dear lit

at present possess ; so let your knocker remain on, and I shall take care not to call again upon a day you expect company."

Mortified at the covert insolence of his speech, Aigline drew away her hand, while her eyes flashed and her cheeks glared with indignation. Looking at her with undisguised admiration, he said :

"Mr. Deerhurst, she is positively in a passion ; but we must excuse the fair daughter of Erin, for such beauty as hers is privileged," and with a low bow he retired.

"I positively hate that man," said Aigline, as she heard the door close after him, "so insulting is his pride, a pride founded on corruption, on the adoption of every ignoble and selfish sentiment, on the indulgence of every low gratification. His obtuse mind despises all the discoveries of science, and mocks at the revelations of Christianity ; yet both were necessary to the gratification and security of his luxurious existence. To such men France owed her revolution. Freville, you say I am a prophet, hear then my belief : if the Cosmopolite influence increase, by lessening all respect for law and religion, it will sap the very foundation of England's constitution ; and the bloody scenes of France will be enacted in this now happy land."

CHAPTER X.

ON the following week I was gazetted for an ensigncy in the — Light Infantry, and, to add to my pleasure I received a letter of congratulation from Clara, including an invitation from Lord Arnheim to spend a month or two at the Fosse, before I joined my regiment.

* * * * *

“I can scarcely wish you joy on an event which causes me so much regret,” said Aigle sadly. “Freville, you have been to me as a brother, and now when you are gone I shall stand alone in this peopled solitude.”

I tried to quiz her respecting Lord Beletrie but she grew excessively angry: to change the subject I spoke of the propriety of calling on acquaint his Lordship with my promotion, and thank him for his attention to my interest. But she and her father advised me to do so; accordingly

ingly on the following morning I proceeded to his residence.

It was about mid-day—I was ushered into his boudoir, that temple of luxury. He was reclining on his silken couch ; he received me with stately politeness, but with a look of inquiry, which seemed to say—presumptuous fellow, what brings him here? I felt confused, and answering to his countenance, rather than address, said, “ My Lord! after the lively interest you have so frequently expressed about the event, I took the liberty of calling to acquaint you with the news, that—”

“ Ha !” he exclaimed with vivacity, “ from your excitement, Mr. Deerhurst, something extraordinary must have occurred. I know the Prince was ill ; good heaven ! can he be dead—or, perhaps, Bonaparte is taken—or it may be, the Russians have declared war against England ; but no ! I have it now : the Parliament have at length resolved on appointing his Royal Highness to the regency, and you, Mr. Deerhurst, aware of the lively interest I have taken in this subject—indeed, in every thing connected with his Royal Highness, have kindly waived all ceremony and have come at this early hour to be the first to communicate it ;—and yet,” he continued, yawning, “ it seems strange that you, Mr. Deerhurst,

should be the first to acquaint me. I had expected that compliment from the Prince."

No words can express my embarrassment; I was quite at a loss to determine whether he had really mistaken, or was merely gratifying his captious temper by sarcasm. However, although he had resumed his recumbent position, as his eyes were fixed steadily on mine, I felt the necessity of a reply: so plucking up my courage, or rather impudence; I said, "My Lord, the intelligence to which I alluded, to me is of a deeper interest;—I have been gazetted for my ensigncy." He sneered, shrugged his shoulders, and in his monotonous tone said:

"This then is the mighty news. Freville Deerhurst, gentleman, is promoted to a pair of colours in the British army!"

Well might I be agitated; though the joke was rather against me, I could not but see how absurd it was to display my excitement before his Lordship, or expect that he could be interested, so I answered gaily, "Yes; my Lord, a step necessary to the taking of Bonaparte:—I expect to have that honour." This good-humoured reply to his peevish manner, pleased his fickle humour.

"You are better tempered," he said, raising himself on his elbow, "than your beautiful cousin, Aigline; however, I like her all the better

for being ardent ; and now, Mr. Deerhurst, let me ask, was it not ridiculous to expect that I was to be rejoiced at your promotion ? However, I must not be too severe ; all young men, when they enter the army, and all young misses when they enter the holy bonds of matrimony, are so elated that they fancy themselves of sufficient consequence to interest society in general : the delusion seldom lasts. The roaring of cannon or of children is a stimulus that rouses them to realities ; and they find the only importance attached to their new position, consists in the additional duties with which they have encumbered themselves."

Being at a loss to determine whether his Lordship expected me to laugh, or to look wise at this speech, I made no direct reply ; but, bowing as gracefully as I could, said, "I shall no longer trespass on your Lordship's time—it is probable I may not again have the honour of seeing you ; but, though you will not allow me to express my gratitude, I shall not forget your kindness." I was going, but he called me back, saying :

"How can you support your separation from Miss Tennant ?"

Wishing to remove all jealousy, I replied, "I shall certainly regret the loss of her and her father's society. I class them among my dearest friends ; but, my

Lord, I am going to the house of the only ever did, ever can love, and this pleasure le the sorrow of parting." He looked pleased in a tone of gallantry said :

"At some future period I shall hope t your paragon. Do you know," he added, v natural sigh, "Lord Beletrieve almost c ensign Deerhurst his fresh youth and passi feelings?" He then bade me farewell.

My pleasure at the prospect of a military increased, by finding that my old friend school-fellow, Charles Mellish, was in the — infantry.

On the morning of my departure, A seemed much affected, but playfully said :

"Freville, in a few weeks you will return t us a last adieu ;—and then, the Tennants w obliterated from the gay soldier's mind."

I chided her for the thought ; sincerely th Mr. Tennant for his hospitality, and hurri to disguise regrets which could only te increase her emotion.

CHAPTER XI.

IN after life, I have often tried to bring back to memory, what "manner of man" I was at the period I quitted Mr. Tennant's splendid residence and fashionable acquaintance to proceed to the peaceful Parsonage. If I have previously dwelt upon my personal advantages and musical talents, it is, because at the period I valued them beyond more solid attainments. I was perfect master of the French and German languages; a good draughtsman, and well acquainted with military tactics; but of the higher pursuits of literature my knowledge was very superficial. On all religious subjects my principles were unfixed; unhappily, from a few perverse circumstances, I had adopted the mistaken idea that in general its professors were either enthusiasts or hypocrites;— a chivalrous idea of honour I nourished, almost to a romantic degree. My passions were violent, but I

was not constitutionally dissipated, and had perfect abhorrence of intemperance.

I did not reach the Parsonage until the four evening after I had left London; as I approached it, my memory turned on the rapturous thought of again meeting Clara. One circumstance alone checked that pleasure. In her letter of invitation she had mentioned that a Mr. Hilton, who acted as Curate, resided with them; and independent of an incipient jealousy, I felt displeased that intercourse should be interrupted by a stranger's presence. On reaching the gate that opened into the parterre, I alighted, and walking up the well-known spot, stopped at a glass door that opened into the reception room.

Mr. Arnheim sat reclining back in his antique chair; the evening light falling on his face, threw it out in full relief, and I started as I perceived its ghastly expression. Leaning forward, him like a ministering spirit, was Clara, the fulness of her youth and beauty contrasted strongly with the sad old man's faded features. While with passionate admiration I gazed on her, I perceived by her directing some coffee into his hand that his sight was quite gone. Affected by what I saw, a sigh escaped me. Clara sprang forward, exclaiming,

"It is Freville!"

Affectionately embracing me, she led me forward to Mr. Arnheim, who expressed pleasure at my arrival, and strove to cheer me by measuring my height with his hands, and feeling my beard and whiskers; but my heart was oppressed by witnessing the change in his appearance. However, I experienced satisfaction on learning that Mr. Hilton was an old man with a large family, and, for the time, was staying at Plinlimmon Castle with a Mr. Aylsbury.

The latter gentleman was a fellow of Christ-Church, and distinguished no less for his abilities than the stern piety of his life, the more remarkable as he had yet hardly reached the prime of manhood. He was the valued friend of Lord Plinlimmon, and through that means he became acquainted with the Arnheims, and, as will appear in the sequel, was regarded at the Parsonage with feelings of affection and esteem, in which, however, I at first by no means participated.

Again established at Cader Idris, though I could not be indifferent to Mr. Arnheim's rapid decline, my days passed rapturously. His intellect was beginning to waver, and he became restless and nervous, except when in the open air. Mounted on his old pony, with Clara and me walking by his side, he would ride through all those scenes his darkened vision could no longer

distinguish, but on which his memory still loved to dwell. And oh! how far dearer to me were these moonlight scenes and wanderings, than pomp, and glare, and flashing of artificial life. How frequently have I returned from the crowded saloons of fashion without a wish to return them, except what might spring from lassitude habit. Whereas, in the days of my brightest enjoyments, amidst the classic scenes of Italy, the romantic forests of Germany, or the luxurious East, there was not a pride or pleasure I would not have gladly forfeited to be again at Calidris, with Clara for my companion.

Mr. Arnheim's illness increased; and he became solely confined to his apartment. Mine was required for the physician, who was obliged to stay in the house. Consequently, at Clara's request communicated to me by Mrs. Waller, a person who from having been nursery governess at Parsonage then acted as its housekeeper, I took up my abode with Mr. Alysbury. This was unfortunately, for I experienced a mad jealousy of the preference I fancied Clara showed to him, and in our constant *têtes-à-tête*, for Mr. Hilton seldom with us, I indulged my irritable feelings by upholding Lord Beletrieve and the Cosmopolitan doctrines which were abhorrent to his pure manly principles. At first he strove to argue

point, but, with boyish petulance, though I could not controvert his reasoning, I supported Lord Beletrieve's false, immoral principles, merely with the view of annoying him. One evening, he rose from the table, and sternly said,

"Mr. Deerhurst, I am shocked to find that you entertain such ideas. As a clergyman, I am not justified in listening to boasted immorality; may I request that in future you will not press this subject."

After this rebuke, he seldom remained in the room with me, except when other company was present. This not only mortified, but grieved me, for I felt that I was in the wrong, yet was too haughty to make any apology.

Another week, and Mr. Arnheim was released from his suffering, and in all directions I heard of Clara's affliction, which was tempered, however, by submission to the will of Providence. The physician departed, and on the following day I remarked to Mr. Aylsbury, at breakfast.

"I conclude I may now return to the Parsonage, and no longer trespass on your hospitality."

He laid down his paper with a look of surprise, and said,

"Mr. Deerhurst," do you forget that at present it belongs to Mr. Hilton, who, as soon as

the last respects are paid to the deceased, and inducted into the living? And now, if I may, I shall acquaint you with the arrangements made by poor Arnheim, previously to your departure, and if any of them are hostile to you, let me entreat of you to suppress your expression of anger, for I cannot, Mr. Deerhurst, submit to them patiently."

I knitted my brow, and then, in a low voice, said,

"I regret, Mr. Aylsbury, that you consider this caution necessary."

He bowed coldly, saying, "You are mistaken at one period, Mr. Arnheim did not object to your coming hither from London. I was not at the time, and he confided his sentiments to me. He apprehended that an attachment formed between you and Clara, which, under the circumstances, he considered would be imprudent. He entertained a great prejudice, if it be one, against near relatives marrying. He dreaded Clara in the army, which he knew must be your position, and his mind dwelt on all the miseries of your mother, Mrs. Deerhurst, had been through. Then he considered you both too placed little hopes in Sir Roger's wealth."

Mr. Aylsbury paused for a reply, but was so much agitated to speak. Clara must

else why her father's fears, I thought; and the idea was so rapturous that I could not dwell on the barriers which separated us.

Mr. Aylsbury continued, "You must remember, Mr. Deerhurst, that the observations I am now making are not my own; and, as far as I can recollect, I shall repeat the words of our departed friend. 'Freville,' he said, 'is a fine spirited youth, and, had his education been attended to, I have no doubt that he would have proved a superior person; but it has been cruelly neglected. Of this, however, I shall not speak, as it casts a reflection on his father. As it is, he is romantic, generous, and a great favourite of mine, but by no means the person to whom I would entrust Clara's happiness. Brought up in retirement, in domestic love, and strong religious faith, and possessed of the finest sensibilities, she will place all her best affections in her husband, and should he prove unworthy, she will be miserable, more particularly if his religious sentiments accord not with her own. And on sacred subjects I much fear Freville thinks too lightly; however, this may be but fancy, or the result of an over anxiety about my beloved child. I feel, Mr. Aylsbury, I have not long to live, and as I would by no means speak on the subject to Clara, who I well know would respect my lightest

wish, I have pressed it on your notice. Freville and Clara become sincerely attached after she attains the age of one-and-twenty. In other respects circumstances admitted of union, I would not that my voice rose from the grave to interfere with their happiness when I am gone you will be her guardian should you think him unworthy, in the name of that God whose minister you are, I entreat to respect my sentiments, and to tell her to respect my memory not to unite her to Freville Deerhurst."

Again Mr. Aylsbury paused. In a tone of voice with passion I exclaimed,

"Mr. Aylsbury, do you mean to interfere between me and my cousin?"

"That," he coldly replied, "shall depend on the circumstances. As this evening Mr. Arden's testament is to be read, you shall then see that I am invested with full power over Clara. She is of age, and I think she wants not more than a few years of that period."

"And were she of age, and I independent, would you give your consent to our union?" he vehemently demanded.

He sternly replied:—"Never while you are the imitator of Lord Beaconsfield, the supporter of the Cosmopolite system, originator

it did in the fatal scepticism which was the source of the French revolution, shall I ever consent to intrust so precious a charge to your care?"

I answered furiously:—"Mr. Aylsbury, I am not deceived; there could be but one motive why Mr. Arnheim consigned his daughter to the care of so young a man as you are."

"The cause," he replied, sternly, "rose from the want of a nearer friend, and this, till his reason faded, caused the old man much regret."

"Did Lady Plinlimmon then refuse the charge?" I demanded, petulantly.

"Mr. Deerhurst, it is right that so near a relative as you should be satisfied on the subject. Lord Plinlimmon's eldest son, who is very wild, at present resides with his family; and, much as his Lordship admires Clara, he would not consider her a match for his heir, and he believes it impossible that his son should be in the house with her and not be captivated; on this account he considered it his duty not to expose either to the temptation. At present Miss Arnheim is to be placed under the care of my step-mother, the Dowager Lady Aylsbury, and in a year, or thereabouts, I hope to have a home to offer that will in every respect suit her taste,

where nothing that can constitute her happiness shall be neglected."

I struck my forehead with agony, and uttered a deep groan.

"Then you really love Clara?" he said in a mild tone.

"To distraction," I exclaimed, "beyond the earth, nay,—beyond my soul's salvation."

He shuddered, and was going to reply when Mr. Hilton entered, and, although I afterwards made several attempts to renew the subject of love, he always evaded it.

In his will, Mr. Arnheim bequeathed a legacy of one hundred pounds, his watch and valuable ring. I was much affected by this mark of his regard; I wished to decline the money, but all he had to leave Clara only amounted to fifty hundred pounds; but she insisted on my acceptance with an energy that set denial at defiance. This, however, did not occur till several days after the opening of the testament, at which I could not attend.

Preparations were being made for her departure, which was fixed for the 22nd of October. Mr. Aylsbury and Mrs. Waller were to accompany her to Bath, where Lady Aylsbury resided. By letters I received, I understood that the Light Infantry were under orders to

readiness to join the service companies then in Malta. Thus in a few days I should be separated from Clara, perhaps, for ever! and even during that short interval I had no opportunity of speaking to her, for Mrs. Waller had positively refused my entreaties to let me see her, nay, even to bear any messages, excusing herself by saying, "Indeed, Mr. Deerhurst, it is cruel in you from any selfish motives to wish to aggravate Miss Arnheim's deep affliction for her father, and her regret at leaving the Parsonage, the happy home which she is now quitting to live among total strangers, for even I am not to continue with her at Lady Aylsbury's, but return to a situation Mr. Aylsbury has given me in the castle."

Still I hovered about the house, and in my frenzy—for my passions almost amounted to madness—would have forced myself into her presence; but Mr. Hilton and Mr. Aylsbury were eternally at the Parsonage, making arrangements about papers, furniture, stock, &c. All these, in the excited state of my mind, appeared such trifles, that I felt a contempt for those who could devote their time, or take any interest in them. It grieved me, too, to see Mr. Hilton occupy the antique velvet chair, once so exclusively Mr. Arnheim's, and sit at his desk, and take quiet and unconcerned possession of all the household gods

of the Parsonage, so associated in my memory with the departed, and which in my enthusiasm I considered as nearly sacred. But when on Sunday I saw him mount the old pony, and ride to church, I felt an impulse to rush forward and drag him off.

Unable to assume any composure, I no longer attended Mr. Aylsbury's hours, but continued wandering through every scene which I had visited with Clara. The result of such constant excitement was a slow fever; I grew fearfully thin and haggard, could find no rest, and my appetite was gone. At this period I must do Mr. Aylsbury the justice to say, that nothing could exceed his kindness. Whenever I chose to return to the castle I found a dinner in readiness, and every attention was paid to me; and frequently he entered my apartment, and strove to win me into conversation. But, oppressed with the idea of his being engaged to Clara, I either preserved a sulky silence, or gave abrupt unmeaning answers.

It was the 19th of October, I sat at breakfast-table with Mr. Aylsbury, for I felt too weak and languid to pursue my wanderings. Neither spoke; and to avoid conversation we affected to be engaged reading the papers, when a servant entered with a note — it was from Clara, saying — “Dear Freville, I purpose dining below at

orrow for the first time since we last met, we then hope for the pleasure of your company. You shall find me composed, and I trust that, for my sake, you will be cheerful at probably our last, meeting in the dear Parsonage. Waller says you were very solicitous to see me. I regret she did not acquaint me of this as it would have afforded me pleasure; for my dear friend, you are my nearest, I may say, my relative."

A short note filled me with rapture: I longed to see Clara, and that at her own invitation; it was owing to the interference of Mr. Deane that we had been so long separated; and she recognised me as her nearest relative! I was going away to write my answer, when Mr. Deane said, "Mr. Deane, I conclude that from Mr. Hilton, to invite you to dinner on Thursday. I have just received an invita-

tion from Mr. Hilton," I answered, coldly, "from Clara."

"That is right," he replied, with vivacity, "things she has good taste, under any circumstances she considers the feelings of others. I am assured it would afflict you to dine at the Parsonage as the guest of another; nor do I wonder, as to myself, a comparative stranger, it is a trial."

was announced, and
Hilton were there on-
ly merely bowed, and com-
placently Mr. Aylsbury rose, and
carelessly : " I hope, I
consider this fire too
growing cold." She
when, springing forward
an exclamation of sorrow
but her lips quivered, till
for a moment, dyeing her
brightest hue. Mr. Ayls-
bury's look of displeasure, drove
her to the dining-room
aroused my jealousy ; I
pressed her hand, and then
eyes I so passionately
look of unutterable grati-
tude ; and, forgetting her
thanks.

at it rendered his absence more observable; he grew suddenly pale, but struggling to conquer his emotion, forced a smile, and then

Hilton, would he take some fish. He and though not much given to wine, a bumper. The next moment she took a deep sigh, and would have fallen, had Mr. Arncliffe, who anxiously watched, started to support her fainting form in his arms, and rushed out of the room. I would have rushed forward, turning towards me, in a commanding voice, to aid :

"Deerhurst, she must not be agitated; I will not to consign her to the care of Waller, but to turn presently."

Feelings of disappointment and jealousy were so poignant, that I perfectly hated him, and when I returned to my seat, breathed a curse against his weakness.

Mr. Arncliffe returned, and proposed walking to the village; Mr. Hilton started up to

In a decided voice, I said :

"I will remain till Miss Arncliffe awakes. I will not to say, and may not again, at least for some time, have an opportunity."

Hilton stared with his great grey eyes behind his spectacles, as if surprised at my pre-

not be interrupted," so saying
house, accompanied by Mr. Hilt

For some time I strolled thro
but my impatience could not
entered the drawing-room, and
couch where Clara slept. Her
robe contrasted beautifully with
but rendered her complexion t
she lay there in perfect repose,
dark lashes and brows, she n
taken for a statue. It were a
account for our impulses, but
least from my own experience
mind is excited by any violent
particularly of grief or love, th
disposition to superstition: as
that pale form of feminine lov
flashed on my soul, that she
survive! Yielding to it, I fell
with a sentiment of perfect idolat

"Lie down again, Clara, and rest," I exclaimed, in a husky voice, "and I will watch by you as I was wont to do in the days of our childhood. Oh! Clara, even then, when instinct alone guided me, my greatest bliss was to sit by your cradle, and rock it; and those dear friends, now departed, smiled to see and encourage our infant love; and now that we are thrown, as I may say, alone on this heartless world, should we not console and support each other?"

"Most certainly, Freville, as far as circumstances admit; but why agitate yourself?—what is your sorrow to mine? Yet I try to command it;" as she spoke she leant her head against my shoulder, and wept bitterly; then, raising herself, continued: "How grateful I ought to be towards you all, for being so indulgent and considerate. I thought to have shown more strength of mind; but oh! it is so hard to forget those we loved!" and again she wept, adding, "the sitting up so many nights, and want of appetite, have shaken my nerves; but have patience with me for a few days, and I shall be again myself."

"Lean your head against my shoulder once more, dear Clara," I cried. "Oh! that you would take me to be your safe-guard and support through all the trials of life!"

From agitation my speech was inarticulate. I

do not think that she comprehended me, and clasping her hands together, she exclaimed:

"No—no; nothing can ever compensate *me* for the loss of my father—my kind, indulgent father!—for years my companion—my friend—my guide! And now we are, in this world separated for ever!" and she gave vent to a burst of passionate sorrow.

Shocked at a vehemence so unlike her usual gentleness, and which convulsed her whole frame I sat beside her, and soothingly spoke of his broken health, loss of vision, and the still sadder fact that his intellects were fading,—representing what a burthen he must have become.

"Speak not in that way, Freville," she interrupted, "say that he has been translated to Heaven, and then, through the inspiration of religion, I shall find comfort; but talk not of his being a burthen to me, for much as I mourn over his debilitated frame, a thousand times would I rather have him here, than lying in his cold grave. In this very room, even since he lost his sight, how many cheerful evenings have we not spent together!—but now, sighing, hearing, speech, knowledge, all are gone! Oh my God! teach me to support this bitter sorrow and not to murmur at thy will!" and flinging herself on her knees, she buried her face in the pillow.

I did not venture to interrupt her; in about ten minutes she arose, looking greatly exhausted. I sat down on the couch beside her; in a languid voice she said:

"Freville, from our intimate friendship, I can indulge my feelings unrestrained before you, and it affords relief. Waller, though so kind, still acts the governess, and would chide away my sorrow; before Mr. Aylsbury's superior intellect, I blush to betray the weakness of my soul; and Mr. Hilton, though meaning well, seems to consider that in offering me an asylum here, he wipes off all tears. Alas! that the Parsonage should pass into the hands of the stranger, and I its best beloved, be but a dependant in the house so long my own! Freville, I do not think the heart of man can fully comprehend the desolation of a woman when deprived of a father's or husband's support—I speak not this in repining, or in disbelief of human virtue,—far from it; I know that I possess many sincere and amiable friends, ready to receive and console me; but they shall not be my anchor. In this solemn season I recollect my father's advice, often impressed on my mind, to seek my hope in heaven."

She continued to converse in this manner for some time. Her sentiments I could not but approve, though burning with impatience to speak

“Yes! I knew her intimately in Bath; she is a relation of Lady I. Her Ladyship wrote to her, to pay and myself every attention.”

“And, Clara, is she a person you whom you expect to be happy?”

“I will not deceive you, Frev. Lady Aylsbury is one of the highest to be met with in Bath, or, as I call it, a great town—you know my own experience is limited. She is respectable, from good fortune, a high position, and never outraged morals; but is a mon-place habits and manners. Of my poor father having refused company him to London, where the oculist, who was to perform a cure on his eyes, I spent the month with Lady Aylsbury, and thus

affection. Devoted to going out, which she terms pleasure—though my heart was actually breaking with thinking of my beloved parent's sufferings and danger, she insisted on my accompanying her to parties—for she devotes every evening to cards ;—and when I timidly ventured to say, 'Lady Aylsbury, in the present state of my spirits, I am unequal to society, and under any circumstances would prefer retirement,' she would answer :—' Nonsense ! nonsense !—in the first place what have you to grieve at ? Is it the illness of a half-blind old man, who, if he lives, will be a burthen to you and to himself ? His living may indeed be a loss, for two or three hundred a year is better than nothing ; but then if you cheer up, and dress well, while with me you have an opportunity of making conquests.—I never saw a girl more likely to marry well, for all that romance and nonsense, like yours, goes down with men.' Then when wounded by her harshness, the tears rushed to my eyes, she would add, ' Well, well, you are offended at my candour ; but I assure you, Miss Arnheim, all your sighs and fine sentiments are out of fashion ! and so they ought to be, for every one must die, and if the living go on grieving for the dead, there will be no end to trouble. I can answer for myself : though I lost my husband and two children, no one ever saw me shed a tear.' Freville, if such are Lady

she would consider n

"And is it possible
cile your mind to
being?"

"Alas!" she replied
tive: her inviting me
is a generous act, for
ful. If she had not in
know what would hav
departed mother, I mi
world."

"Oh!" I exclaime
before her, "consent
Supported by the bless
culty I could not sur
exclaimed, as she woul
demand a promise, an
performed till Sir Rog
even then if I am no
would perish by the --

her hand, vehemently exclaiming, "You that are so good, so pious, pause ere you refuse. Remember, I warn you : my fate, nay, my immortal soul is in your keeping, Clara. A word from you may save or condemn me—say you will be mine, and mould my future conduct, nay, my thoughts to your wishes."

"Rise," she answered in a stern tone, and looking displeased. "I know not what effect this violence might have on others; but, Freville, it lessens my love, and destroys my confidence."

I was too much agitated to speak, but I struck my head with violence, and would have fled; gently detaining me, in soft accents she cried :

"Forgive me, if I have been too severe; but loving you as an only brother, a declaration of passion sent a shudder through my soul. Oh! Freville, waive the subject for ever, and be my friend."

I turned away my head, and she continued :

"Freville, my present glorious hope is the high mark of heaven, the rigid fingers of death have impressed on my heart the fleetness and uncertainty of human happiness. Pray to God to strengthen me in these holy thoughts: for mark me, Freville, my sojourn on earth will not be long;" saying these words she rushed from the apartment.

Next morning I learned Clara was so ill as to require a physician, who pronounced that she was threatened with brain fever, the result of over excitement.

Any description of my despair, as I reflected that I was the cause, and admitted the probability of her death, must fall short of my sufferings. Recollecting her regret at the declaration of my passion, in my distraction I stooped to a subterfuge. Oh heaven! could I have then foreseen the future evil to which my deviation from the truth was to lead, sooner would I have submitted to the most painful death; but impulse, not principle has ever been my guide. While my heart throbbed to bursting, while drops of agony rolled down my forehead, and my hand trembled till I could scarcely direct my pen, in words as calm as they were false I addressed her with a solemn assurance that I entertained towards her no warmer sentiment, but that of an affectionate brother; nay, to give a colour to the damning lie insinuated that my heart was devoted to Aiglin Tennant; but, that I would willingly have sacrificed my own views to save her, the child of him to whom I owed so much from infancy. The pure soul of Clara, incapable of hypocrisy, doubted not my word.

A week passed and I received no answer; but

though Mr. Aylsbury and I scarcely spoke, pitying my anguish, he hourly sent me word of her progress, till all danger was past. In this state I was to join my corps the following week. They were under orders for immediate embarkation. So, again, I wrote to Clara, entreating her to grant me a last interview, and the words of this letter too were calm. But who can sound the depths of the human heart? Well, she could not write from very weakness, but she sent Waller to desire that I would spend the following evening with her, and as Waller had known me from infancy, and enjoyed Clara's confidence, I began reiterating to her the insinuation of my love for Aigline.

It was on a Sunday evening that I went to take leave of Clara; she lay on a couch placed near a window which commanded an extensive view bounded by Cader Idris. She was very thin and pale, but lovely as a Madonna. I tried to be composed; but when I saw around the toys of our childhood, our books, the little cradle in which I had rocked her, and the tiny yacht she so admired—I was quite unmanned, and tears started to my eyes. She did not perceive them, for, probably, affected by the same recollections, she had buried her face on the pillow. Waller entered with coffee and a tray covered with fruit and sweetmeats.

"See, Freville," said Clara cheerfully, "ill as was, I did not forget the old habit of celebrating events by a little *fête*."

I tried to smile and partake of them, but my emotions were too powerful. I allude to these circumstances, apparently so trivial, because they serve to show the purity and simplicity of her habits, afterwards so cruelly misconstrued. After a while we became more composed, and as none of us could partake of the delicacies, she desired Waller to pack them for me in a basket. Though I smiled at the idea of a young officer travelling with sweetmeats, I would not mortify her by a refusal; she then presented to me a locket with her hair, and a very handsome writing desk.

"And here, Freville," she added, "as the Tennants have been so kind to you, bear this parcel to your beautiful Aigline, with my kindest regards, and say, I hope at some future period claim her acquaintance and friendship as a sister."

I coloured with vexation at her having readily received the false impression; but either not noticing my agitation or imputing it to some other motive, she continued:

"It is valuable Lisle and Brussels lace which Lady Plinlimmon sent me; as I have a long mourning, do oblige me by taking it to Miss Tennant."

I was going to reply, and probably would have betrayed myself, but the physician entered, hastily saying,

"Can it be possible my patient is still up? I must be very angry, particularly with you, Mrs. Waller, who should have been more attentive to my instructions."

She apologized by saying, that I was going off next morning to Malta, and that Miss Arnheim wished to prolong our interview.

"Hem!" he drily replied, "the very reason why you should have shortened it; but Mr. Deerhurst is too reasonable to injure the health of his fair cousin, so must now bid good night—and the shorter the adieus the better."

There was no resisting this command, while my very heart quivered at the agony of parting. I rose, and took Clara's hand, but could not utter a word; with all the *navet  * of her pure nature, she laid hers on my shoulder, affectionately kissed me, and sobbed out,

"God bless you, my own dear cousin Freville."

I pressed her convulsively in my arms, and without speaking, rushed from the apartment. Next day, after taking a polite leave of Mr. Aylsbury, I quitted for ever the beloved scenes of Cader Idris and the Parsonage, and proceeded on my rapid route to London.

CHAPTER XII.

It was on the fifth of November that I arrived in London, and nothing could appear more desolate and triste than that great city. The shops had closed in, but as I had so many preparations to engage my attention, on the following morning after partaking of some refreshments I drove to the Tennants'. The hall, as usual, was brightly lighted. I sprung from the carriage and entered with the familiarity of an old friend, the servants told me Mr. Tennant was from London, and, for the last week, Miss Tennant had been confined to her apartment by a cold. This was a severe disappointment. To depart from London without bidding Aigline adieu seemed impossible. I wrote on my card, "Dear Aigline, the day

few moments the servant returned with an answer : it was a request that I would adjourn to the music-room where she would soon join me. Although I did not experience the deep emotion I always felt at the prospect of seeing Clara, I was a good deal excited, and waited impatiently for her entrance. She had retired to rest, but hurried on a loose morning robe, and as her hair was folded up, still retained her night-cap. Neither painting nor poetry could do justice to Aigline's exquisite loveliness, as panting from haste she rushed into the room exclaiming, " Oh ! Freville, I was afraid you might not have leisure to wait, and I am so happy to see you again, and have so much to relate." The servant now brought in lights, for before there was but a solitary lamp ; and we were left alone. I know not how it occurred, our intercourse for years had been so intimate—the intimacy commenced in childhood—but we both felt abashed and remained silent ; at length she said : " Freville, you are looking miserably ill. Is anything the matter ?" I spoke of my uncle's death, and my separation from Clara. She sighed, and emphatically said ; " Loving her as you do, how can you endure this parting, uncertain when you will meet again ?"

I replied, " Aigline, we are beings of a strange mysterious destiny ; the heart which struggles with

was another pause, and then
“And yet I envy you both
sincerely attached to any one
stand alone in the world.”

To cheer a dejection so un-
spirited, and which I imputed to
want of gaiety I cried, “Aigline,
the gallant Lord Beletrieve?”

She started up, and clasped
me, and exclaimed: “Speak not of the man,
he was my destiny, and that
I knew. Uttering these words she flung
herself into a chair, in a state
of distraction, that perfectly
astonished me. I waited till the first
passion passed off, and then sitting
down, she entreated she would acquaint me
with the cause of such agitation.

She replied, “You say that
tomorrow you depart from England,
and we never meet again.” She then

unhappiness, for indeed, Freville, I am very wretched."

"And why not now? Aigline," I exclaimed, as I sat beside her and pressed her hand within mine. Here we are alone—with no fear of interruption."

She withdrew her hand in confusion, again sighed, and then in a hurried accent exclaimed, "It is a very late hour, my father is from home, and not even acquainted with your arrival; latterly, more than once, he has accused me of being giddy, perhaps with too much cause. Come tomorrow, Freville, and I shall my tale unfold." So saying, in spite of my efforts to detain her she ran out of the room.

On the following day I had so much to do, that Mr. Tennant's dinner was nearly over when I arrived; however he received me and my apologies with his usual affectionate politeness, and Aigline said she began to fear that I had forgotten my engagement. After the fuss of re-ordering the soup, &c., was over, I observed with regret that both Aigline and Mr. Tennant looked very ill. There was something forced in their cheerfulness; and their manner to each other, which was wont to be so playful and engaging, appeared restrained. All this gave me uneasiness, and I anxiously longed for an explanation. When the

dessert was laid on the table, after hastily serving a few glasses of wine, Mr. Tennant rising, "Freville, I have an engagement which cannot be postponed; however, I shall return in a couple of hours to join you and Aigline at six." "Cheer up, my love," he said tenderly stooping to kiss her, and pressing his lips to her forehead. Aigline started up, threw her arms round his neck, and kissing him affectionately, called out, "O dear, dear father." He returned her embrace, and then darted off.

"Let us adjourn to the music-room, Aigline," he cried. "Something has happened to render me unhappy. Am I to be denied your confidence?"

"Oh! no," she replied, "my heart is broken, but I will tell you all that has occurred since you left. I was so sad and unable to proceed she burst into tears, and pressed her to take a glass of wine, and then led her to the music-room; but she appeared so dejected, that to relieve her, I began to talk of sending her the parcel of lace;—this had the desired effect. Without looking at the lace, she expressed her gratitude, asking me no further questions. When I mentioned that Clara was going to reside with Lady Aylsbury, and expressed my regret on the occasion, she replied sadly, "Is it not a strange fact that every thing in this world goes contrary to our wishes? There is Miss

heim, who would prefer retirement, going to be launched into fashionable life, under the auspices of one of its highest members; for though Lady Aylsbury is in herself nothing remarkable, she belongs to the Plinlimmon party, and that is sufficient to ensure her consequence; and, here am I, who sacrificed so much to please the Beletrieve set—driven in disgrace from their society—disgraced because I cannot copy their vices.”

It was long before I could persuade her to be more explicit. At length, after having obtained from me a solemn promise of secrecy, and that I would not resent the insult she had received, in hurried accents she said: “Freville, the subject is so exciting to my temper that I must be brief in my recital. In pity’s sake do not interrupt me, as I dread that my father may return before I have told you what I wish to confide to you.” I promised all she requested, and with much agitation she began:

“Freville, for about a month after you left London, things went on much as usual; I was constantly engaged in a round of fashionable amusements, chaperoned not only by Lady Mainstown, but by other ladies of even higher rank; in short, I was all the rage. And now that my sun is set, I may admit the proud truth of being a belle.” She sighed deeply. “One drawback

ing the old man off. I
elbow in the set, until
then when I got to th
him ready to receive r
leant over the piano to
if it was the harp, he
panying me; and when
too difficult, he would
with his foot. Freville,
vivacity of my tempe
provoked that I woul
by being actually rude
with his usual calmness
fore him by one of his
or he would say, 'Aigli
tations, so let me ass
despise me, that I am
all your present conse
Freville, at other times
when I was at the pian

"A month passed thus. His Lordship was then confined to his apartment by the gout. To disguise the painful fact, his domestics, as usual, reported that he had retired to the country. Oh vanity! what mortal would despise your power, when even the tortures of disease are secondary to your influence? But, Freville, you look impatient—know then, that removed from the Beletrieve's engrossing attentions, I made a conquest of Sir Henry Lyndmere; you have met him at Lady Mainstown's, so no need of description. My father was in perfect delight when he proposed, for though inferior in rank and fortune to Lord Chancery, in every other respect he was far preferable. I looked forward to my nuptials with a composed but rational—most rational, expectation of happiness. Henry Lyndmere, a man of great refinement, and who passionately loved me, proclaimed his good fortune: all seemed prosperous, when Lord Beletrieve, by anonymous letters, cruel representations, smiles, sneers, shrugs, and the vilest insinuations, cast the foulest calumnies upon me. You may well start, Freville; my brain burns when I reflect on this injury. Let me then be brief: Sir Henry Lyndmere broke off our intended marriage. Oh! the bitterness with which he accused—scorned me; the very excess of his love taught him to deride my protestations

of innocence !. . . Worse than all, this has broken my father's heart, and so irritated against me, that though I was ill, dangerous since Sir Henry's departure until this even has scarcely deigned to speak to me."

She wept hysterically: I attempted to her.

"Good heaven, Aigline!" I cried, "sure not possible that you mean to let Lord Bel triumph over you in this manner?"

"What am I to do?" she answered. "I am capable of bringing his conduct before the public. I have no proofs, although in my heart I am aware that all the insults and neglect received originate in him: still, he is too powerful to place himself in any one's power. You, Freville, he is a perfect Belial, and under soft words of compliment and praise, I have seen him destroy the reputation of women as innocent as myself."

"I never thought of bringing the matter before the public," I answered, "it would be a ruinous measure; but why not let me and you and connexion challenge him?"

She interrupted me hastily:

"I demand that you give me a solemn promise not to interfere in this business."

"Listen patiently, I entreat, just while

present one circumstance that you seem to overlook. Aigline, it were madness in you to tell your father; the fury that must animate him, if he knew you were so insulted, would naturally deprive him of all calmness and discretion; but it is not so with me. Aigline, I would not kill Lord Beletrieve, but if we meet, you shall be amply revenged; and should he refuse my challenge, he shall be branded throughout England as a liar and a coward."

Far from entering into my views, Aigline, (who with all her levity was perfectly timid and feminine) threw herself on her knees, accusing me of betraying her confidence, insisting on my solemn promise not to interfere: so, what with tears, entreaties, and my dread of her committing some act of violence, I at length consented to take no notice of Lord Beletrieve's insult; indeed I had no opportunity, for he had left London, and was not expected back for some weeks, and I must either forfeit my commission, or join my regiment within a few days. Yet I was bitterly mortified and provoked to think that such a villain should go unpunished, and expressed so much vexation, that poor Aigline, forgetting she was the one injured, began to soothe me; and to change the subject, said:—

"I suspect, Freville, it is my father's intention to dispose of our house, and leave England."

I demanded had she any idea where he was likely to settle?

"Not the least," she answered; "but I sincerely hope not in Cork, where former friends might receive him coldly.

I then intreated of her to write to me constantly.

She sighed deeply, saying, "It would afford me much pleasure; but, Freville, without my father's permission I dare not promise; latterly I have offended him, and you know how I respect and love him; besides," she added, "I have suffered so much from thoughtlessness, which, indeed, is the source of all my errors, that I am resolved never again to act indiscreetly, so, when you return from distant lands you shall find me a grave, prudent, demure, domestic girl, perhaps a matron, and she gave one of her brilliant laughs: Alas poor Aigline, when next we met how different was your lot!

Mr. Tennant returned soon after; he appeared dejected, remarked it was very cold, and ringing the bell, ordered the refreshments to be brought to the music-room. None of us had inclination to partake of them; but, forcing a glass of wine on Aigline, he kissed her cheek, and in an affectionate tone said, "Freville, does she not look very ill?" My reply was lost by Aigline throwing her arms round his neck, and sobbing hysterically.

"Go to rest, my dear child," he said. She turned towards me, reaching out her hand. "No leave-takings," he exclaimed, "you are already too much excited," and he was hurrying her away.

"Aigline, you must write to me," I exclaimed. She looked beseechingly at her father, who gravely answered: — "No, Freville, you are the betrothed of another, as such, I cannot countenance your correspondence." I heard a sigh from Aigline, the next minute the door closed after her.

Mr. Tennant returned and sat down near the fire, with forced gaiety saying: — "Freville, draw over the small table, and place the glasses and decanters on it. The parting of friends is always sad; let us cheer ourselves with wine." I obeyed, and we began to converse, but were both absent, and after a few moments sunk into silence. Half an hour might have passed when I arose, and, taking him by the hand, said, "Mr. Tennant, in leaving England as a military man, it is hard to say whether we shall ever again meet. Receive, then, my grateful thanks for all the kindness and hospitality you have shown me, and, rest assured, that with life only can I cease to remember it."

He started up, looking perfectly wild, then

George, who since his mother's death was the wisest of us all. Frevi man! ruined by my own inexperience though I do not despise the fortune I have so wantonly cast away, my misfortune fell solely on my shoulders with fortitude." He paused, for a moment, then added, "Happily my friend's legacy, is independence. My only uneasiness respecting his death was the mortification of losing his good name. To disguise it as he may, the best of us youth must in his soul despise himself. He stood aloud again, striking his forehead with his hand.

I felt so shocked and grieved that I was unable to reply. I must, indeed, have lost all good feeling, if I had not known the misfortune that fell on my generous friend.

Too much to be said of him.

ted, although while in business I deceived
f and others by calling it speculation ; but
regrets and observations are out of place.
le, you say that you owe me some kindness,
t so. Now, mark me, if amidst the vicissi-
of this life, my poor Aigline should ever
friend, or protector, promise to be to her
other. She is a noble-minded, high-spirited
enerous to a romantic degree, but vain,
stless, yielding, and inexperienced. Oh !
now not how cruelly since her mother's
I have neglected her, and squandered away
tune that by right should be her's, yet she
me with filial tenderness. I wander from
subject. Swear, Freville Deerhurst, swear
when I am gone and George absent, should
stances require it, that you will be to Aig-
a guardian, holding her honour sacred, as
was, indeed, your sister ; thus will you
requite any kindness I may have shown

l on my knees, and, calling to Heaven to
a, exclaimed, " I swear ; and, as I hold my
sacred, may God reward me." He pressed
nd, muttered some words of thanks, and
ade me a hasty adieu.

CHAPTER XIII.

As the next six years of my life were unconnected with her, in justice to whose name I have written this Memoir, I shall hasten them, merely alluding to a few circumstances necessary to the understanding of future events. I joined my corps at Dover, and in the year 1805 sailed for Malta, to join the service there.

My reception by my corps, and to which my father had formerly belonged, was at first flattering; for as the son of Lionel Deerhurst was expected to be a good and generous fellow, my popularity soon vanished, for I not only had a perfect abhorrence of intemperance, but was influenced by example to indulge, the excess from enlivening, only stupified me. Conscious of this, I resisted all entreaties to partake in revels with a pertinacity very offensive to my merry companions of the Light Infantry,

all its changes and chances, still retained
gentle character for good fellowship. Then
grandson, and supposed heir of Sir Roger
first, I was expected to be rich, and, being
obliged to explain away the mistake, the economy
obliged to practice was imputed to close-
d far from gaining merit for my prudence,
dubbed a stingy, niggardly, good-for-
fellow, the very reverse of my father.
I was vain of my person; and, though I
despised Lord Beletrieve's villany, I re-
newed admiration for his graceful address,
strove to imitate. In truth, he formed a
contrast to the roughness of some of
others, who, by an awkward mistake, seemed
to have noisy, coarse habits and manners with
want of conduct, so that my politeness, far
winning admiration, was considered as pup-
pet. However, I soon established for myself
a character of being an admirable officer, was
attentive to my military duties, and by
knowledge in music improved the band, which
my father's time had fallen off rapidly; all
this gained for me the notice of my commander,
caused the other officers to treat me with re-
spect, so after a period the first feeling against
me faded, and on the whole, my time passed
pleasantly enough, though, except to a young
man, our pleasures must have appeared trifling.

officers rode back to their
There was also much gaiety
seldom played deep, for
emergencies of the moment
no taste for money; how
subject of drink, my comrade
complain of my prudence

I remained upwards of
when our corps were sent
thence we accompanied
squadron to Egypt, with
Alexandria, and were so far
we afterwards made an attack
but from events I shall not
defeated. There the English
loss, and I received a wound
which for the time disabled
honoured by the compliments
and, for my gallantry in leading
men to the storming. I

quitted England, and from that period I received no intelligence of my friends. This was a serious annoyance during the first six months. I had written to Mr. Tennant and to Mr. Moneymore, but neither of them had replied ; it afterwards appeared that the neglect was owing to the chances of war in which at the time all Europe was engaged, and our regiment being celebrated for its gallantry—as I have already remarked—was sent from one post of danger to another.

When I had been about a month in Sicily, two letters that had been directed to Egypt reached me. The one was from the West Indies, announcing that my father, from whom I had been so long parted, had fallen a victim to yellow fever ; the other—let me confess it—afflicted me still more severely, being from Lady Aylsbury, containing the intelligence of Clara's marriage.


Lady Aylsbury's letter, though written on a subject generally considered joyful, to me was even more agonizing than my father's death ; for it announced that Clara was going to be married to a Mr. Lascelles, a nephew of her Ladyship's, and of whom she spoke with all the pompous egotism of her character, representing him as a person of graceful manners, superior accomplishments, and noble principles. After this tirade, she added :

“ Mr. Deerhurst, I consider it my duty, as the present guardian of Miss Arnheim, and the aunt

of Mr. Lascelles, to explain that he is a person very fastidious in his ideas of women; indeed, to what I term a foolish degree; but this error,—for it amounts to error,—is excusable in him, as some years since a very awful tragedy occurred in his family, owing to the indiscretion of one of its members. Observe, Mr. Deerhurst, my name was Lascelles, so that the unfortunate lady to whom I allude, though connected by marriage, was no blood relative. No, no! all the women of our family were uniformly chaste and prudent. But to return to Mr. Lascelles, knowing this weakness of character, I have, though with difficulty—prevailed upon Clara—whose mind is replete with old-fashioned ideas of candour, ingenuousness, and such stuff—no doubt acquired from her father, who from his position could know little of the conventions of good society—never to allude to your name; for I know my son, the Rev. Mr. Aylsbury suspected you to be greatly attached to each other; and were she to speak of you, what with your being the grandson of Sir Roger Deerhurst, and her nearest relative, Mr. Lascelles would naturally make inquiries, and when he learned that you were a friend of Lord Beletrieve's—a frequenter of the Cosmopolite Club—now held so infamous, why the result would be, Mr. Lascelles instantly breaking off his marriage. And if the business was bruited

about, though I am perfectly aware of Miss Arnheim's purity, I certainly could not extend my protection to her; for after all, except in a few flagrant instances, every one's character depends upon report. Then reflect, what would become of Clara? For the Plinlimmons, her best friends, are residing on the continent; besides, she is too beautiful to introduce to their sons. Clara has argued the point with me: in the first instance, she credits nothing to your disadvantage, then she insists that all mysteries are bad, and that if Mr. Aylsbury were in England, he would disapprove of her keeping any secret from Mr. Lascelles, to whom she declares herself sincerely attached. She asserts that you and she from childhood, viewing each other in the light of brother and sister, never entertained a warmer sentiment; and that if she really loved you, no earthly power should induce her to falsify her solemn vows at the altar by giving her hand to another. Now, Mr. Deerhurst, all this sounds well, and I by no means condemn Miss Arnheim for the little artifice—it is her sex's province—and, if she expressed herself otherwise, I should consider her indiscreet, as your candid Misses are always accused of effrontery. However, as the preparations for her nuptials are advancing rapidly, I shall soon be relieved from my charge; for I assure you, Mr. Deerhurst, the guardianship of a

young lady is a very serious obligation ; moreover, to me, as I propose going to Italy, and Clara is to accompany me there, it would, of necessity, add much to my expense. This was one of the reasons why, from the commencement, I encouraged Mr. Lascelles' passion ; for, impressed with the memory of his mother's guilt, and being a person of powerful sensibilities, he from boyhood has encouraged a presentiment that, if he ever married he should be unfortunate. Consequently, though now past three and thirty, and much admired, he resisted all temptations, resolved to die a bachelor, till he met Clara, whose gentleness, want of showy accomplishments, retired, and religious education, all suited his views. Now, Mr. Deerhurst, admire my generalship,—knowing that Mr. Lascelles and Mr. Aylsbury were attached friends, indeed, to what I consider an absurd and romantic degree, I never told the former of Clara's intimacy with Mr. Aylsbury or the Plinlimmons until every thing for her union was arranged ; then I wrote off to acquaint them, and to ask, as her guardian, Mr. Aylsbury's consent, adding we all know how fastidious Mr. Lascelles is. Consequently, Clara, who tenderly loves him, and has been much shocked at receiving various accounts of Mr. Deerhurst's dissipation (who, fortunately, is now out of Europe) has resolved not to mention his name, as she really is ashamed



of her relationship to him. So, my dear friends, she and I mutually request that in your letters you will not allude to him; and then, I added, I really think that when by the order of Nature we possess no control about who shall or shall not be our relatives, it is very hard we should be accountable for their faults. However, there is no use in setting up opinions, however justly formed, against the custom of ages. Well, Mr. Deerhurst, in due time came letters from Mr. Aylsbury and the Plinlimmons, expressive of their delight at Clara's happy prospects, and congratulating Mr. Lascelles on his choice, eulogizing Clara and her old father up to the skies: better than all, they took my hint, and never alluded to your name. Then there were innumerable presents to the bride elect—I must admit, very rich ones; and, as the Plinlimmons cannot come over to England, the Lascelles (I speak in the plural, for long ere you receive this Clara will be married) are to pay their first bridal visit to Italy, and then Lady Gertrude Plinlimmon's long-projected nuptials with Mr. Aylsbury are to be consummated. So you see, Mr. Deerhurst, I have provided nobly for my *protégée*, whom, in despite of some old-fashioned, prosy, countrified ideas, I tenderly love, for, during a long and tedious illness with which I was afflicted this winter, she paid me the most indefatigable atten-

tion. Night after night she sat up by my couch and, when you consider how destructive late hours are to a girl's looks, it was a wonderful proof of kindness. However, I am happy to see that, though she grew rather thin and delicate, her beauty did not suffer, for, as Mr. Lascelles observes, it is the expression of her countenance which renders her so lovely. Mr. Deerhurst I shall now conclude, and, as an antidote to any offence my candour may have given, I inclose a short letter from Clara, which I permitted her to write, on obtaining her promise of never again addressing you.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Yours, &c., &c.

"LOUISA AYLESBURY.

Frantic with jealousy and rage, without even opening Clara's letter, I crushed it under my feet, and, tearing it into atoms flung it away. I felt that the hope of being married to her was fled, and with it the brightest charm of my existence. In vain I called to mind her dependent position and my poverty; the reflection, far from soothing, only awakened my darker passions, and led me to curse Sir Roger whose injustice and cupidity had left me in poverty. It may be said, was not Clara's indifference so often expressed, and the attachment so

professed for Mr. Lascelles sufficient to reconcile me to our separation? Could a passion such as mine exist without sympathy, return, or hope? To this I can only answer, that led on by some fatality, or, to speak more correctly, by inordinate vanity, I persuaded myself that Clara ardently loved me, though obliged to deny it from timidity, or policy, or some other motive, for my heart always found a plausible excuse to nourish this fatal mistake. Again, it may be said, how did this supposition agree with my knowledge of the simplicity and truth of her character? Alas! it is in vain to argue, passion is ever made up of contradictions; and it is so terrible to think that the person whom we love beyond all earthly things, for whom we would sacrifice our very being, feels no reciprocal sentiment, that we wilfully deceive ourselves into the vain belief.

It is impossible to say to what results my melancholy might have led, had not my distraction been somewhat relieved by the arrival of my old friend Charles Mellish in Sicily, who had been gazetted to an ensigncy in my regiment, and now arrived to join his corps.

CHAPTER

AFTER my long sojourn at the active duties of my profession, I had leisure to reflect on the past, on the future, I returned with my family in the May of 1811. Finding that I had left Grosvenor Square, and that as to their fate, I resolved to write more, in hopes of his being able to clear up my doubts. I succeeded in finding him on entering his presence, and perceived a change in that peculiar peculiar expression occasioned by the absence of his family. Thinking that I had surprised him, I could not refrain from making him acquainted with my old acquaintance, the peculiarities of his mind.

"Mr. Deerhurst," he replied, "the Retrievers are out."

though in the actual sense of the word
lives, nay, breathes the air of London,
times forces himself into those societies
was once sought for as the greatest

surprise, but do not grieve me," I
; "for I despise the man."

"One despises him now," coldly retorted
Eymore, "for his fortune and health are
and worse than all the Prince has quar-
rel with him."

"I ask for an explanation?" I demanded

"I sincerely hope it is owing to his
relations about Miss Tennant, whom you,
Eymore, may recollect, as I have seen
in your father's?"

"You be in earnest," he exclaimed, gazing
with surprise, "to suppose for a moment
that Royal Prince would turn champion to all
the foppish and giddy misses in London? Positively,



Highness had heard of the reports circulated against Miss Tennant, far less would he interest himself on the occasion. I merely meant to suggest that Lord Beletrieve's conduct to her, which I have no hesitation in pronouncing infamous, nay, I would say so to his face, might have thrown such obloquy upon his character, that his Royal Highness declined his acquaintance."

"Why, Mr. Deerhurst, that is a very big speech, and as an Irishman would say—you looked very big entirely while you spoke it;—but to end all the suggestions, by which you make a heroine of that fool Tennant's daughter, in a few words I shall solve the mystery—observe, I say in a few words, for it was a political business; and being no politician, it is a subject I always avoid; first, because I feel no interest in it, except as it may effect stock—next, I consider it dangerous, as it leads to quarrelling. Now, to come to the point, when Lord Beletrieve tired of his liaison, or as he delicately termed it, his familiarity with Miss Tennant—"

Here I interrupted him by standing up and vehemently declaring Miss Tennant's innocence, and my resolve to challenge any one who presumed to doubt it. This violence, which certainly bordered on rudeness, offended Mr. Moneymore, and it was some time before I could persuade him to renew the subject. He then in a peevish tone demanded :

"What term shall I use, Mr. Deerhurst, least likely to rouse your temper? And as you choose to be so very abrupt in your manner, you must excuse my candour in saying, that your sojourn abroad has not improved your politeness."

I made some blundering apology; and after a time he proceeded, first in a sullen voice, but gradually, however, he became more cheerful and communicative.

"Well, Mr. Deerhurst, whatever was the cause, on Lord Beletrieve's breaking off his intimacy with the Tennants, he insinuated that he had found this Aigline, with whom you appear so much in love, so insufferably vain and ill-tempered, that in spite of her beauty and musical talents, he had quitted her in disgust."

I became enraged at this. The man's insolence and self-sufficiency were enough to provoke a saint, and I never professed to be one.

"What do you mean, Mr. Moneymore," said I, "by speaking of persons with whom I was intimately acquainted in this manner? I am deeply interested in knowing what has become of them. You can be a man of few words when you please, especially when money matters are in question. Suppose that I am to pay you for your information, and be concise."

He was offended at this, for the wretched fellow was, as the world goes, honest, and he replied somewhat sharply,

"My dear Sir, if I must call you so familiarly, what do you mean by the insult your words seem to put upon me? I was telling you of the Tennants."

"Indeed you were not," I interrupted; "it was of them, and of their present abode I wished to be made acquainted."

"Sir," said Mr. Moneymore, "I wish it were possible to do what the old proverb tells us cannot be done, namely, to put old heads on young shoulders. Could that have been done, and had it been done in your case, I should have heard a very different speech from you. Now, Sir, Lord Beletrieve ——"

Aware of Mr. Moneymore's prolixity on the Beletrieve subject, I interrupted him by exclaiming, "Excuse me, but it is of the Tennants of whom I would speak."

He answered peevishly :

"It is in bad taste, Mr. Deerhurst, to tease me about these people,—nobodies, who would never have been noticed but for Lord Beletrieve's weak passion for the daughter; however, to satisfy your impatience, I shall acquaint you that some years since—soon after you first joined your regiment—Tennant, who was neither more nor less than a vain gambler, was finally done; and his fine house, stud, &c., to none of which was he entitled, went to the hammer. By-the-bye, I attended the

sheriff's sale, and picked up some good bargains."

Smothering my regrets, I said, "And what of his daughter?"

He replied carelessly :

"I heard some report of her having married an old Scotch Highlander of ancient family, a General, Mc Misserton; indeed, I understood he was old enough to be her grandfather."

"Good heaven!" I exclaimed, "is it possible that Aigline could so sacrifice herself?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Deerhurst, his marrying her is the wonder; for when a young lady is minus of both cash and character, she is glad to patch both up by a marriage of convenience."

I sighed bitterly at the idea that a little thoughtless levity should have so humbled Aigline, as to entitle every fellow to speak ill of her; her marriage too grieved me, for though I had never loved her with the ardour and devotion I experienced for Clara—still from the period the latter was united to Mr. Lascelles, a distant hope of Aigline's yet being mine had pressed on my fancy. Observing the sneering expression of Mr. Moneymore, as he rather rudely stared at me, I commanded my emotion, and said in a negligent manner :

"Can you tell me, has Miss Tennant's match proved fortunate?"

"No! her union proved unfortunate: the old

Highlander was prudent and domestic—and extravagant; however, they struggled together till Mr. Tennant, who had returned to London and resumed his gambling habits, was so involved that he was seized, and thrown into the King's Bench prison. Now mark her folly! She immediately quitted her husband's share with him his imprisonment, and continued till Tennant's death. By the way, after his decease, all London was in a blaze. Some battle gained, I think at a place called Suholt, in which his son, George Tennant, distinguished himself. To say truth, I feel some interest in what you call England's glory, and inquired the particulars."

I sighed deeply, and asked him, did he know what had become of Mrs. Mc Misserton, at her father's death?

"I never heard," he replied; "but as she returned to her Scotch Laird, who, I believe, was very much attached to her."

"Are you acquainted with his direction?" I demanded, for anxiety to hear about her conquered my dislike to his cavalier manner of answering.

"No, Mr. Deerhurst; but any letter directed to *the* Mc Misserton, of Glenlow Castle, Highlands, is sure to reach him, even with the shire. Don't forget to put *the—the,*" and

Money more gave his provoking self-satisfied smirk.

I bowed and said : " Mr. Money more, I must trespass still further on your patience, while I inquire whether Sir Roger has made any communication to you relative to a letter I wrote to him some months since, requesting that he would authorize you to give me money to purchase a troop. At present, through the interest of General Mc Kenzie, I have the opportunity ; and really, it would be as cruel as unjust to deprive me of the advantage. These stirring times, it is painful to a military man to have his sword lying idle in its scabbard ; and our regiment has been so long abroad, and is so exhausted from sickness, that there is no chance, I hear, of our being sent to the Peninsula."

" I can assure you, Mr. Deerhurst, when your name was announced, I concluded it was on that subject you called, so, though pressed with business, admitted you ; and here you have wasted my time with fruitless gossip, about persons in whom I never felt any interest ; though, I fancy, Mr. Deerhurst, in that we differ,—for you seem to have a very lively interest for Mrs. Mc Miserton."

I offered some apology ; then, with more kindness than he had ever before addressed me, he said :

“Mr. Deerhurst, Sir Roger has written to me on the subject; and, though my employee I must admit that he is unjust, and, I may add inexplicable. He excuses himself for not purchasing your troop, under the plea of a present fall upon East India Stock—writes as if his very existence depended upon accumulation! and then, boasts of the splendour with which his son Etienne is surrounded; indeed, he expresses himself towards him with the weakness of dotage.”

I sighed as I reflected on Etienne's brilliant prospects, while my poor father had died in obscurity! And then inquired of Mr. Moneymore, what kind of youth he was reported to be.

He answered: “My Pondicherry correspondents represent him as of noble form, but proud, impatient of control, and violent in his temper; moreover, wild and dissipated to a degree.”

“Good Heavens!” I cried, “can Sir Roger be aware of this? And if so, can he endure patiently such faults, when he disinherited my father, his eldest son, for errors comparatively venial!”

“He both knows of Etienne's faults, and excuses them. And now, Mr. Deerhurst, I must bid you good bye, for I am obliged to go to the Exchange. However, should you feel inclined

again to address Sir Roger, I shall forward your letter, and should be happy at receiving his commands to purchase your troop."

I thanked him graciously, we shook hands, and I retired.

On returning to the hotel, I wrote to Aigline, in an affectionate, but distant style; congratulating her on her brother's gallantry and success, but avoiding all allusion to her father's death; in a careless manner I mentioned, that as soon as the grouse shooting commenced, it was my intention to go to Scotland, when I promised myself the pleasure of visiting her in her Highland home, and also of being introduced to the Mc Misserton. I then mentioned that I hoped soon to purchase my troop; observed that her early friend, and my Cork school-fellow, Charles Mellish, was in the same corps with me, and would accompany me to Scotland. In short, I wrote in a manner which I considered the most jealous husband could not object to:—all the time anticipating what fun Aigline and I should find, in bringing our Irish humbug into requisition, at once to deceive and humour the old General.

Next day I quitted London for Bath, hoping to find the dowager Lady Aylsbury there, and through her, learn something of the Lascelles.

It was strange, that every allusion to me with sadness, whereas, even when that Aigline was unhappily married, I associate her image with gaiety ; but, as disappointed : Lady Aylsbury had no Bath for three years, and all I could suspecting her or Clara was, that immed the nuptials of the latter, they had all Italy.

This was a severe disappointment. pleasure in returning to England, was of seeing Clara—overlooking her u another, and the ties which then prmented it, and which should have t to conquer my passion. I nourished priding myself on the strength of attachment. Charles Mellish was my and I was sure of his sympathy, for he my sentiments for Clara, by his own feelings of devotion to Aigline, for boyish love continued in all its force—purity ; for while he execrated and mo her union with the Mc Misserton, h the proposal of accompanying me to S

“No,” he said, “why should I rev now criminal ? And I esteem Aigline to indulge a single wish derogator honour.”

In every respect Mellish was a fine specimen of an Irish gentleman : intelligent, liberal, and courageous ; honourable to romance in his ideas, he was slow to credit meanness or deceit in others ; but these noble traits were shaded by a wild and thoughtless love of adventure—a readiness to oblige even those unworthy of the kindness ; thus he was eternally involving himself in scrapes, and the ready ingenuity, and playful wit, with which he managed to get out of them amused his corps, with which he was a general favourite.

After waiting with some impatience for General Mc Misserton's answer to my letter, I received the following :

"The Mc Misserton, of Glenlow Castle, has opened a letter directed to a lady called Mrs. Mc Misserton *alias* Aigline Tennant, a shipwright's daughter ; of her he shall make no remark, or give any information to Lieutenant Deerhurst, who, from the style of his address, the Mc Misserton has no doubt, considers himself an extremely knowing, agreeable fellow, ready to make love to any man's wife, if she suit his fancy, and reward the husband for the liberty, by shooting on his manors. All excellent fun, no doubt, to Lieutenant Deerhurst, and his military companion ; but far too refined

for the honest, and somewhat patriarchal ha of the Scottish Highlanders. Now, my yo gallant, for such, no doubt you, Lieuten Deerhurst, consider yourself, in love or idlen I grant you my permission to travel thro the Highlands or Lowlands, as may suit y taste; but if you presume to come poach within the precincts of Glenlow Castle, I f warn you, that in spite of modern improveme you shall find it guarded by a warlike r jealous of their master's honour; and who w think as little of cutting you down, as y my sporting Lieutenant, would of shooting game, or seducing my wife. Now act as please.

“ MC MISSERTON,
“ Of Glenlow.”

Although greatly provoked, I could not l being amused at the manner in which my gal intentions were refuted. Mellish joined in sincere regret, that Aigline should have b so unfortunate; however, we both agreed any attempt to visit Glenlow Castle w not only be useless, but might expose her persecution, and ourselves to danger; so, indulging in the bitterest invectives against old sawney, we dismissed the subject. T these two lovely women, in truth the only o

towards whom I ever entertained a sincere attachment, seemed for ever separated from me. Would to Heaven it had been so, and that we had never again met !

The winter passed off pleasantly enough. Our corps were quartered between Chatham and Sheerness, and in the former neighbourhood, some of our officers were paid much attention ; but Mellish and I, being but Subs, had few invitations ; however, we made frequent parties to London, and formed several agreeable acquaintances among the Navy. Early in February, Colonel Chilli, who commanded, gave me leave of absence, and I accompanied a brother officer to Cumberland, on a visit to some of his friends. While luxuriating amidst its romantic scenery, I received intelligence that my father had left me some property in St. Domingo. It would have been very acceptable, for, still speculating on Sir Roger's rupees, I had incurred several debts. Through the interest of my Colonel I obtained a renewed leave, but my voyage to the West was unfortunate. I was attacked by yellow fever, involved in a law-suit—in short, the bequest did not liquidate the expences incurred ; so, after much hardship and a long absence, I returned to England more involved than ever, and immediately joined my corps then quartered in York.

CHAPTER XV.

MELLISH was truly rejoiced at my return and in talking over some Chatham adventures mentioned, that after my leaving it he had through some of his navy friends, formed an acquaintance with a Mrs. Onslow, a pretty black-eyed Welshwoman, a merchant's wife, who was always inquiring after me, and said she had known me intimately in Wales. This surprised me, as I had no recollection of the name; however, I began to banter Mellish about her; he assured me that though rather pretty, Onslow was very homely, and worse, in my opinion, very saintly.

"Then," I inquired, "what could have induced you to spend so many evenings at her house, as you have just confessed? Was her husband a very good fellow?—I know, Mellish, in point of after-dinner good-fellowship, you are perfectly Irish."

"On the contrary," he replied, "Onslow was as stupid a commercial man as you ever met—not one idea out of his store-house; but our old school-master's son, Thomas La Franck, was a constant visitor there, and though he has become a perfect saint, as well as divine, for he has entered into holy orders, still he is a most agreeable person; very musical, and as partial as ever to you, Deerhurst; and then he and I chatted over old times—Cork, the Tennants, &c., &c., and, in short, though La Franck and I had a few squabbles, or I should say that I wrangled with him for trying to make me as good as himself, for his meek spirit would not resent my *brusquerie*, I found him a most pleasing companion. After all, Deerhurst, a little intellect and a high tone of feeling give a zest to conversation; and, to acknowledge a truth, except when our mess converse of the Peninsular War, and its probable results, they talk as confounded nonsense as one could expect to hear from a set of school-girls."

I sneered, and sarcastically observed: "Then the charm of Mrs. Onslow's house lay in La Franck's preaching! He was always a prosy, tiresome youth; though I must admit, obliging, good-natured, and moral. Pray, Mellish, how far have you advanced in your saintly progress?"

Colouring up to the eyes, he refuted the charge

of growing devout, as if the accusation was disgraceful, exclaiming with vivacity :— “ So far, Freville, from liking the eternal preaching about religion, I should not so frequently have attended Mrs. Onslow’s parties, but in expectation of meeting the beautiful Lady Eastville, her particular friend.”

“ And who is the beautiful Lady Eastville ? ” I demanded ; “ I never even heard the name before.”

“ Oh ! true,” he answered, “ though she was staying in the neighbourhood of Chatham all the time you were quartered there, with some old dowager, whose name I quite forget, but who had a very pretty place on the banks of the Medway. However, owing to delicate health, Lady Eastville did not go into company until after you left for Cumberland ; had she, you must have heard of her, for nothing was spoken of at the mess but her beauty.”

“ And was she so beautiful ? ” I inquired.

He answered, “ I never saw her except once on horseback, and then she was veiled, but her figure appeared fine, and she rode in good style.”

“ I thought, Mellish,” said I, laughing, “ that she was your attraction at Onslow’s. A saint, too ! I conclude by a person of her rank forming

an intimacy with Mrs. Onslow. Forgive me, Mellish, but I rather fancy La Franck was her Ladyship's inducement. I have always heard that these Methodistical fellows are very insinuating among women—"it belongs to their vocation,"—and if La Franck has not disappointed the promise of his youth, he must be a pleasing-looking person."

"Well meant on your side to annoy me," replied Mellish, in the same tone of *badinage*, "but, as the fates were against my meeting Lady Eastville, the point of your wit is lost. Twenty times at least I went to Mrs. Onslow's to see this beauty, but alas! for my hopes, I was either too late, or she had sent an excuse; in short, something always occurred, fortunately, perhaps, as from description I had made up my mind to fall desperately in love."

"But, answer, did La Franck know her?" I demanded.

"Intimately," was the answer, "and he lauded her as a saint. By the by, Freville, I forgot to mention that Mrs. Onslow one evening in speaking of you, said: "I am sorry Freville Deerhurst is not in Chatham now; however, as he is absent, I shall not mention his name to Lady Eastville, though were he here, I most certainly would."

“And what inquiries did you make, Mr. Mellish, relative to this observation?”

“None,” he replied, looking vacantly at the ground. “What could I have made?”

“A thousand,” I said; “first, who is this Mrs. Onslow that so familiarly called me—who, before I had heard of her—by my Christian name?—next, why should she speak of me to Lady Freville?”

“I really don’t know,” said Mellish, carelessly. “except that as you were both beauties, Mrs. Onslow might think it right to extol you to the other without any compliment. Freville was considered the handsomest fellow in the ham, all crowded as it was with the gallants of Mars and Neptune.”

Pleased at this flattery, I changed the subject and dismissed it from my mind, until it was afterwards brought back to my recollection by circumstances the most painful.

* * * * *

Being in the command of a detachment at a distance from York, I was surprised one morning by Mellish, who possessed all the levity and ardour of his country, entering my room abruptly exclaiming, “Deerhurst, as I rode here to breakfast, preparatory to bidding farewell, as to-morrow I set off for Co-

grieve to say, on account of my poor mother's illness) guess the discovery I made."

"You must give me some clue first," I answered; "is it any thing that concerns myself?"

"That is all a matter of taste," he replied, gaily; "but, to end surmise, that noble-looking residence overhanging the romantic dell, with its extensive lawn sloping down in a fine bold sweep to the river's bank, and the well-stocked deer park at the left, are Sir Egbert Eastville's. Why look so stupid, Freville? Don't you recollect our stopping the other day near the gate to look in at the pheasants who were stalking about as graceful and proud as so many demoiselles in a ball-room, and in as much security as if they had never heard a sportsman's shot, and you and I wishing to have one or two good ones at them? Now, Freville, do you remember?"

"Perfectly," I replied. "Has this Sir Egbert given us permission to shoot on his premises?"

"He would see us to the devil first," cried Mellish, impatiently; "but he is husband to the beautiful Lady Eastville I mentioned to you as being Mrs. Onslow's friend."

"True," I said, languidly; "and now, may I ask, what is all this to me? Has Sir Egbert left his card at our mess? Or has he only visited old

Chilli,—a safe companion for his lady, bad specimen of our corps ?”

“He has done neither,” said Mellish, “present his lady is from home. Besides, I stand he seldom visits the military, and v does, merely gives them one or two dinners, repulsing all intimacy. Shoot Egbert’s manors, indeed—what an absurd

“Don’t be angry, Mellish,” said I ; “but you appeared so excited, I concluded some pleasant had occurred. However, I went into York with you.”

“I thought,” he replied, good-humouredly, “that you would be delighted at being in the neighbourhood of the beautiful Lady Egbert. Of course, as a single officer, within three miles of him, Sir Egbert must call on you. They say, when he pleases, that he can be agreeable and hospitable.”

“And, your head being full of Irish romance and adventure, you expect I am to fall in love with her Ladyship. Is Sir Egbert a second Mc Misserton ?”

“As yet I know nothing about him ; I can inquire from Chilli, who seems to know the Yorkshire people.”

I dined that day at the mess ; some staff were present, so Mellish and I feared to draw

Chilli's wit, at times very gross, and by no means attic; but in a negligent way I inquired of a gentleman who sat next to me if he knew Sir Egbert and Lady Eastville. He replied intimately, that she was a very lovely woman, but grave, religious, and so domestic, that she seldom entered into society, being devoted to a family of young children. On hearing this last remark, Mellish, who was attentively listening, shrugged his shoulders, muttering, "When a woman has a pack of children, away with all romantic ideas—they destroy the illusion;—so, Freville, waive the lady, and stick to the pheasants. Any chance of a shot there?"

Smiling at Mellish's notion of the non-romantic, I again addressed the gentleman, by remarking what a quantity of game appeared to be on Sir Egbert's demesne, inquiring was he liberal with it?

"Not particularly so," he answered; "though he keeps a fine pack of hounds, and often treats his friends to a stag hunt, to which he invites the whole neighbourhood, and generally entertains them sumptuously; but on the whole, Sir Egbert is a man of literary and domestic habits, one who enters company as a duty he owes to society, more than from any pleasure he finds in it."

"Is he not a very old man?" I remarked.

"By no means," was the answer; "on the contrary, I should say that he is scarcely eight and thirty, and, though not critically handsome, is generally considered so. I can assure you, Mr. Deerhurst, that he is one of the most esteemed and influential men in our country, though, I must admit, not the most popular, as his manners are cold and stately, besides, he rather shuns than seeks popularity."

Mellish again gave me one of his knowing looks, muttering, "No chance of any game in that quarter."

Soon after the gentlemen retired from the mess and I then learned that the person I had been conversing with was Doctor Jerold, the most intimate friend of the Eastvilles.

On the following morning Mellish set off for Cork, having first—being hard up for cash—sold me a bargain his favourite horse, called Red Bess, a famous huntress. On selling her to me he explained her excellence on all points but leaping, at which she was somewhat awkward, giving me advice how to manage on such occasions. This I ridiculed, for, though Mellish was considered the best horseman in our corps, indeed one of the most active and graceful I ever met, still I was too vain to acknowledge his superiority, and longed for an opportunity of proving

mine. One soon offered : Sir Egbert Eastville returned to his place for a few days, and was accompanied by some friends and a foreigner of rank, and, though the season was unfavourable, desirous of entertaining them, he invited the whole neighbourhood to a *déjeuner*, to witness the enlargement of a stag, and several of the party to dine with him after the hunt. On this occasion he sent cards of invitation to Colonel Chilli and the other officers of our corps ; but, as he did not pay the compliment of calling in person, we somewhat haughtily declined his hospitality ; still, a few of us, impatient for the sport, rode to the hunt.

Even at this distant period I can recal to memory the enlivening scene which led to such sad results. The morning's sun, though too warm for the exercise, shed its brightest hues over the wide expanse of country through which we galloped. The stag was the largest and swiftest I had ever followed ; the hounds in excellent order, and the Yorkshire gentlemen mounted and equipped in a style that would have graced a royal *cortège* ; yet even amidst them I flattered myself Red Bess and I were worthy of notice. Always speculating on the prospect of coming in for some of Sir Roger's rupees, I had fallen into the destructive habit of running bills and borrow-

ing money ; and priding myself on good taste always turned out in what I considered a superior style.

It was a splendid run ; the stag bounded over hill and dale, not leaving a trace of its light footsteps. Men, horses, dogs, united for the moment by the universal sympathy of destruction, rushed impetuously after him. Now the doomed animal dashed through a narrow branch of the Ouse, then rushed up the overhanging hills ; again he heard the hounds at his feet, after running through a wide sweep, it fled down to the lowlands, where some fields of corn well enclosed, gave a hope of eluding its unrelenting pursuers. The excitement now became too powerful for resistance. The fences were very high, and in some places topped by quickset hedges. These afforded little impediment to the dogs, who burst through them, but the hunters were obliged to ride round and seek for the best spots for leaping. As to me, in my hurry, forgetting Mellish's advice, I attempted to spring Red Bess over a ditch ; but she broke fortunately for me. Although under mental excitement, I became weak, almost to imbecility, in personal danger I preserved the greatest presence of mind ; so feeling the brute rolling backwards, I made a powerful effort to dash myself on one side, so as to escape her weight falling

and crushing me. This, probably, saved my life, but I met with a severe accident : my head coming in contact with the stump of a tree growing out of the ditch, received a slight contusion ; and my left leg, over which the haunches of the animal rolled, was broken.

These accidents caused me considerable pain, and in some degree confused my senses ; still I retained an apprehension of my danger, and, dreading every moment to be trampled on, I struggled to roll myself down into the gripe of the ditch, but was unequal to the attempt. I then called aloud for help, but my voice was lost in the loud cry of the hunters—"The stag is at bay—the stag is at bay." It seemed that, finding itself exhausted, faint, and unequal to continue its flight, it had turned proudly round to face its pursuers, and all panting as it was, and hopeless of escape, struggled to revenge itself on the yelping hounds, which had conquered its nobler nature. Already two of them had been gored to death ; the boldest of the huntsmen then galloped forward to see to the safety of the pack, while others, more timid, attempted to rein in their steeds. At the instant I heard a horseman approach towards the place where I lay : I made an effort to rise and warn him off, but fell back in the effort, and for some moments objects became indistinct ; but I after-

wards learned that Sir Egbert Eastville, who riding to the very spot where Red Bess breasted, seeing me on the ground, and finding it impossible to check his hunter, had at no risk sprung from its back, and, giving it the rein, it bounded over me, clearing the ditch. He raised me in his arms, and called loudly for me. I was now sufficiently restored to be conscious of what was passing. In a few moments a gentleman came up, exclaiming :—" Ah ! Sir Egbert, how is this ? I saw your horse dash by alone, and guessed you had fallen ; not seriously hurt, I hope ! "

Sir Egbert in a peculiarly mild voice explained that he had alighted to afford assistance to a gentleman whom he feared had received a severe injury.

" Ah ! I am glad it was not you," observed the other, carelessly ; " positively the hunter is worth a man's life. I have been hunting upwards of thirty years, and have never witnessed such a famous run. But damn it, Old Dick C as usual, beat us all. But this time he has suffered for it, for, just as he alighted to give the creature *grace*—a custom he would not neglect to his estate—his favourite hunter, Wildfire lay down dead ; and there is Old Dick blubbering like a schoolboy over the carcase, and swearing

the dogs, vowing they shall never feast on Wild-fire, and Doctor Jerold in his dry jocose way advising him."

"Doctor Jerold, do you say?" cried Sir Egbert, interrupting him: "how fortunate his being at the chase!"

"Catch him at that!" replied the other, "moreover, this confoundedly warm weather! No; but just as the stag was stalked—for there was no other way of getting the animal down—he drove up in his gig on his way to York."

"How very fortunate!" repeated Sir Egbert, in the same mild voice; "would you be so kind as to ride over to wherever he is, and desire him to hasten here, for I much fear this gentleman, who appears a stranger, has broken his leg."

"A d——d awkward horseman he must have been; for when he first entered the field, Collet and I were struck with the strength and beauty of a bay mare he was mounted on. I fancy he is one of the officers quartered in York."

"All this time he is suffering," said Sir Egbert, in an altered tone; "and, as it might fatigue you to call Doctor Jerold, if you promise to remain here till my return, I will run myself for him."

This had the desired effect: the Nimrod of thirty years' standing, humming Bright Chanticleer, rode off, and in a few moments returned

with Doctor Jerold. Explanations at place, I made an effort to thank Sir Egbert, but he would not give some account of myself, but the doctor, who was examining the contusion on my leg, which he pronounced to be trifling, rebuked me from speaking. He then, after having bled me and set my leg, after which he spoke in a familiar tone which proved how intimate he was with the proud Baronet, told him in a low voice, but which I overheard—that he had met me at the mess, considered me a very gentlemanly person, and that he understood from the commanding officer that I had been in Egypt, and distinguished myself at the storming of Acre. This, no doubt, gave Sir Egbert a favourable impression, for he instantly said, “If removing him to York would be attended with pain or danger, let him be brought to London. By going through the orchards we are at half a mile from it; there he will be more convenient to you, Jerold, and during our absence being at the Terrace can be no inconvenience. Lady Eastville does not propose returning next month, and by that time I should suppose he would be quite recovered.”

“Not quite,” answered the Doctor. “However, Sir Egbert, I really think removing him to York might be attended with danger,

he added, in a friendly voice, "consider that the noise of a barrack-room would tend much towards his recovery."

"Then," replied Sir Egbert, "I shall ride forward, and give orders to prepare for his reception; and remember, Jerold, you dine with me."

He answered gaily, "I never forget venison and claret."

Sir Egbert laughed, and, mounting a horse his groom led, rode off. Soon after I was laid on a litter, and conveyed with much care to his splendid residence. Arrived there, I was placed in a chamber situated in the left wing; but, though the most distant from the dining-room, as the evening advanced, every now and then my slumbers were broken by the loud merriment of the hunters.

Early on the following morning Doctor Jerold entered my apartment. I was much pleased with him; to scientific knowledge and skill he united a happy humour, and great kindness of manner. After examining my head and broken limb, he gave me numerous directions, to which he begged I would carefully attend, adding, he hoped to see me next day, but was then obliged to attend his patients, several at a considerable distance. "By the by," he continued,

"I must not forget to give you Sir Egbert's polite message, requesting that you will treat the things here as if it was your own home. Sir Egbert would have paid his compliments personally before he went; but I prohibited him, as it was not downright necessary to your restoration."

"Has Sir Egbert departed so early?" demanded.

"Ay, two hours ago," he answered. "Lady Eastville has had a slight cold, and her uxorious husband, that he is quite unwell till he returns to her. Good encouragement to bachelors like you and me, Mr. Deering marry!"

I smiled, observing, "I understand that Eastville is very beautiful—at least when she is staying in the neighbourhood of Cheltenham was considered so. However, I had no opportunity to see her, as I was in Cumberland on leave."

"She can scarcely be termed beautiful," answered; "indeed, it is injustice to do so for then when people see her they are disappointed; but Lady Eastville is lovely and her angel's goodness shines through her every day. At the instant the servant announced that she was at the door, so, shaking me by the hand she departed."

next three weeks passed drearily enough. A contusion on my head proved more troublesome than the Doctor had anticipated; my leg greatly swollen, and I was very feverish. Affected my nerves, which were weakened to a degree that the slightest noise startled me, and worse, my mind became haunted with ghastly dreams and presentiments. I am particular in mentioning this, because it helps to account for a scene which otherwise must appear forced or over-wrought; and still in this detail of my sufferings; far from any exaggeration, I will try to give the full expression of my feelings.

CHAPTER XVI.

As soon as the fever, resulting from the irritation of my broken limb, had abated, by the order of Doctor Jerold, I was laid on a couch, which was gently rolled into a small, but elegant apartment adjoining the sleeping room into which, on my first arrival, I had been carried. No place could be more happily adapted for an invalid: its windows, reaching to the ground, opened onto a wide terrace, commanding an extensive view. Near the house it was adorned by the most fragrant and richest plants: roses and flowering myrtles forced their way through the iron sashes, contending for the prize of beauty with foreign plants—many of which I did not even know by name—their more delicate perfume mingling with the scent of the climates, whose blossoms, intermingling with the bright flowers of the trumpet-honeysuckle, hung in festal drapery above them. The front of the terrace sloped off towards the lawn, its vivid

relieved by small knots of American shrubs, or baskets of geraniums, removed from the conservatories at that genial season; some of the most precious of these were placed near my window. Below, lay the noble river, its clear waters thrown into relief by the wooded hills that rose almost perpendicularly from its edge, their rugged sides enlivened by deer and numerous rabbits. Near the couch on which I reclined, stood a dumb-waiter, weighed down with every delicacy Doctor Jerold could suggest as likely to please my waning appetite, and with which my noble and hospitable host took care I should be supplied; at the other end was placed a small table covered with books, pamphlets, papers, prints, &c., &c.; and, as the night closed in, the small glowing wood fire, and the soft light of lamps, in vases of the purest alabaster, replaced, and not ineffectually either, the bright morning sun, and the elaborate bowers of myrtle and roses.

This description may appear trivial and uncalled for; but I would, if possible, convey to the reader's mind the peace and happiness of that mansion—of that family of whom I was the fell destroyer! Oh! God, infinite in thy wisdom, unbounded in thy goodness, how surpassing—beyond man's comprehension, is thy mercy, when

such a wretch as I dare even in penitence approach thy footstool ! But Thou, my Redeemer who rejoicest not at the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live, hast not disdained to hear my prayer. These memories of the past are too painful, cannot proceed.

* * * *

Again I resume my narrative. About a month might have elapsed since my accident, and in despite of every attention I suffered from nervous fever, whose effects led to an event apparently unworthy of notice, but which subsequently, in concatenation with others, helped to work out the evils which I once impiously imputed to the irreversible decrees of an unrelenting destiny. Alas even to the righteous it is sad to think on what mere trifles our worldly prosperity depends ; the calculations of human wisdom are but dust in the balance against the tide which drives us on to fortune, be it for weal or for woe ; and this, which on a casual view may appear unjust or mysterious is solved by the great *truth*, that in heaven alone can we anchor our hopes of happiness. To quit my digression, though willingly would I loiter, — so much do I dread the detail of coming events — I received a letter from Charles Mellish, in which, with all the enthusiasm of his warm affec-

tions, he entered into a description of his grief for his mother's death,—repeated many proofs of her self-denial, practised to enable him to purchase a lieutenancy, to which he would be appointed in the next Gazette; he then alluded to our school-boy days in Cork, and all the changes which had since taken place. This letter deeply affected me, and increased the fever under which I laboured. I sunk into a kind of uneasy slumber: fearful dreams haunted me. I thought I was hurling Clara down a steep precipice at Cader Idris; that she grasped at my knees, calling on me to save her. I awoke from the torture of my leg: a gentlemanly, stately-looking person, holding up a child in his arms, was standing at my bed-side; the face of the child was bent over me, as the curtains were nearly closed; the light was dubious, it appeared to my confused and troubled fancy, that it was Clara, of whom I had been dreaming. Yielding to a sudden impulse, starting up, I clasped the child in my arms, muttering: "Clara—beloved Clara!"

Terrified at my vehemence, with a cry, the child escaped, nearly rolling off the bed; while Sir Egbert Eastville—for it was he—inquired, proudly:

"Mr. Deerhurst, what is the cause of this strange emotion?"

Ashamed of my childish folly in yielding to a delusion, I was muttering some excuse about dreaming, raving, and so forth, when my embarrassment was relieved by the entrance of Dr. Jerold, who, on feeling my pulse, expressed his vexation at finding me so ill. Here, Sir Egbert joined in his regrets. To be brief, a few days passed on, and during these, the proud Baronet paid me unremitting attention. My fever passed off. It was the fourth evening, when entering my sitting-room, at an unusually late hour, he said :

“Mr. Deerhurst, I have a request to make of you—it is quite a nursery tale. I have just received an account from Lady Eastville, who is staying with her two elder children at a friend's house, some miles distant, that they have been seized with measles of a virulent description under these circumstances, she will not permit Herbert—her pet,” and he smiled, and pointed to the boy who had caused my emotion, “to join her. Unfortunately, I am obliged to attend some magisterial business in York. Now, to a conclusion to my most unromantic tale, I must acquaint you that Lady Eastville disapproves of the nurse now in charge of Herbert, her being so for the last few days was a mere chance. Should I be presuming too far, Mr. Deerhurst, to request, that during my absence

you will sometimes permit Herbert to remain with you? It will be a protection; and you will find him useful to fetch and carry. Won't you, Herbert?" he exclaimed, leading the bright child towards me. As he did so, for the first time, I remarked Sir Egbert's appearance. He was above the middle size, slight, but of very erect carriage. His hair was of a light brown, with a tinge of yellow;—his complexion fair to delicacy, but relieved by full whiskers. On the first view his countenance was tranquil, but more closely examined, the deep set eyes were expressive of subdued passions, and at times there was an expression of scorn in the indenting of his short upper lip. His manners were pleasing though distant; he impressed one with the idea of a person possessed of fine sensibilities, fastidious to refinement, attentive to all the forms of politeness and etiquette, surprisingly so for a man of his extensive information.

Reaching out my hand to Herbert, who bounded towards me with the most engaging familiarity, I assured Sir Egbert that I would pay him every attention, and that I would prove an excellent nurse. I then expressed my grateful sense of all the kindness I had received. He seemed pleased with my ready acceptance of Herbert whom he charged to be a very good boy, and then departed for York.

In a thousand little ways Herbert won on my affection. It was pretty to witness his love and care of my broken leg; he would lay his hand so gently on it, kiss it so tenderly, shake his head with such solemn pity; then fixing his intelligent eyes on mine make me tell him of the naughty horse that had thrown me. But I need not explain the thousand ways by which infancy entwines itself to the heart; the most callous cannot remain insensible to the sincerity and warmth of childish affection, yet alas! in this sinful world, even this pure sentiment is alloyed by the reflection, that often in after-years the heart of the parent is wounded by the indifference, the disobedience, the selfishness of the once beloved child.

About a week had passed since my first introduction to Herbert; every day I became more attached to the little fellow. In the interval Doctor Jerold had twice called at the Terrace, to examine my leg. He acquainted me that Sir Egbert's daughter was out of immediate danger, but continued very delicate, and that Lady Eastvil suffered much from anxiety about her. At the end of the week Sir Egbert again came, and remained for a few days. He said it would be some time before he returned, for he was going to Lac Eastville, and then that an imperative necessity obliged him to proceed to London, but he hoped

on the following month his family would be well enough to accompany him back, when they would all be so gay and happy ; and even if I were quite recovered, that I should remain to partake of their pleasures. My attention to Herbert had won his gratitude, and I found him one of the most pleasing companions I had ever met. In general, from the stateliness of his carriage and the studied politeness of his address, he appeared to strangers proud and distant ; far from it, his mind was too exalted, too dignified for pride or affectation ; but he possessed a tone of high feeling which rendered his opinions of honour and of women perfectly chivalric. Aware that his ideas on most subjects were too highly wrought for general society, and might expose him to ridicule, from which his sensitive mind shrank with horror, he became reserved, except to the favoured few who ever found his conversation unique, interesting, and instructive ; for he was a man of letters and acquainted with almost every Court in Europe. His love for Lady Eastville and his children was perfectly enthusiastic ; never was any person more calculated to enjoy domestic love, or render his home a terrestrial paradise ;—but the awakening of one fell passion blighted all.

CHAPTER XVII.

ON the following morning Jerold joined us, and we spent two days agreeably. I then left, Sir Egbert again commended Herbert to my care; and the Doctor, after giving me directions about my health, observed, 'he was going to visit a distant patient, and would not be able to see me until the following week.' It was then early in August, the weather was exquisite, and my leg so far recovered, that I was able to hobble out on the walk beneath the window, which opened to the ground. When I went by my crutches, Herbert insisted on joining me, and I found amusement in observing him in the light at imitating my lameness. Thus I continued until about the 15th, and in the meantime more Jerold was expected. It chanced that that day was unusually hot, and Herbert complained of head-ache, and appeared oppressed, and was unwilling to go out to the weather; this caused me no inconvenience, and in the afternoon when a breeze got up

him out. At first he appeared cheerful, collecting blossoms, or bounding forwards, as he observed the gambols of the fawns on the distant hill, or clapping his little hands as he heard the screams of the rooks, who were flying towards a distant grove. Suddenly he threw himself on the grass, complaining of fatigue ; with difficulty I got him to return, and, placing him on a couch, again resumed my walk, but had not proceeded far, when I was alarmed by hearing him utter the most piercing cries. I hastened back in an alarm, which was increased by perceiving his attendant lying on the ground with her clothes on fire. I concluded she had fallen down in a fit, but soon discovered it was the result of intoxication. Having extinguished her dress, I rung the bell violently ; it was answered by a footman equally intoxicated ; this was the more provoking as I found that Walter the butler, the person to whom Sir Egbert had entrusted the care of his place, had gone to York. I ordered that an express should be sent after him, for I was ignorant of Sir Egbert's address.

Though these measures somewhat calmed my fears, I spent a restless night ; the exertions I had been obliged to use inflamed my broken limb, and Herbert was very feverish, which I solely imputed to the terror he had suffered.

Walter; but, as on inquiry I learned it was a constant habit, and that beside she was afflicted with a violent, cruel, temper, I received her only sternly, declaring my resolution that neither Doctor Jerold, or any other person whose authority in the family arrived, that she should be dismissed. Even then she tried to conciliate me, but, provoked at the annoyance and danger which had resulted from her inebriety, I treated her with the utmost severity, commanding her not to approach Herbert, who should remain in his apartments until another attendant was procured. Then she yielded to a fury, which convinced me the accounts I had received of her temper were not exaggerated, and I found great difficulty in getting her to leave the apartments. Having done so, I dismissed her from my thoughts as a being too insignificant to awaken more than a momentary anger.

The day passed heavily. Herbert con-

fire, calling in lisping accents for his mamma ; my position was very embarrassing, when I found some relief in the arrival of Walter. He had lived with Sir Egbert for several years, and in his absence had full control over the other servants. He told me that Nelly had been recommended by Lady Aylsbury, and for that reason, though not approved, Sir Egbert did not wish to part with her ; but that except on emergencies she was never entrusted with the care of the children. He then offered to set off immediately for Dr. Jerold, and, in the event of missing him, to procure some other physician. Afterwards we consulted on the propriety of acquainting Lady Eastville, and at length concluded on doing so, since, should Herbert die, it would in some degree prepare her for the shock, and relieve us from the responsibility. Soon after Walter departed, and I sat down by the couch in a very melancholy mood, for I thought poor Herbert was dying, and he had so gained on my affections, that I felt a father's anxiety about him.

Thus I continued with little intermission till about nine in the evening ; by that time his sleep appeared more calm, and, as the air of the room was very sultry, I resolved to take a few turns on the terrace, and had just arranged my crutches for the purpose, when I heard a chariot drive up

ing to the couch, knee be
pressed sobs press the han
lips. This, of course, mus
and I rejoiced at her an
Jerold's entering, but he
there I continued standing
window, considering what I

I heard Lady Eastville in
utter a prayer; after whic
she approached the bell, her
graceful. I was aware tha
known to her was awkward
might be an intrusion, so
push open the glass door, p
the walk; in doing so my
obliged to look for suppo
noise, she advanced, exclai
is there?" I made no answe
drapery of the curtain, she
the evening light fell upon

ment for my exhausted frame ; the current of blood rushed to my head, then retreated to my —a dizziness seized me, and for some time was incapable of moving, then catching at furniture for support, I staggered forward. She sunk kneeling by the couch, her head buried in the pillow, but I saw her bosom heave as Her-
slumber grew more feverish ; yet, even then I only thought of myself, and stooping over her, I cried “ Clara—but no, pardon me, I should have known you as Lady Eastville ; after the lapse of many years may Freville Deerhurst hope to be remembered ? ” She started up exclaiming :—“ My senses deceive me, or is it indeed my own name which I hear ? ”

From the force of my deep feelings, I had addressed her with a coldness ; not so Clara, her countenance brightened with pleasure, and she took my hand with friendly warmth. I was too much overcome to speak, but she was quite calm, and as I



Herbert's illness to terror; I recapitulated the scene that had occurred, speaking of Nelly Duggeon's intoxication and insolence with the utmost asperity, and concluded by expressing my surprise that such a person should be retained in the family.

She answered mildly, "The fact is, Freville, Lady Aylsbury, who you must know is in many respects a very whimsical person, for a long time kept this Nelly as a kind of confidential servant, and afterwards, as I strongly suspect, finding her an incumbrance, and wishing to get rid of her, pressed her into my service, requesting I would retain her in it until she returned from Frankfurt whither she was going. There is so much low dissimulation in Lady Aylsbury's character, that in spite of her position, I believe her capable of any meanness; heretofore I thought Nelly of so little consequence, that I would not run the risk of offending Lady Aylsbury by dismissing her; but after the scene you have just described, on Sir Egbert's return, she shall quit the Terrace." I was strenuously advising her to that effect, when to my astonishment, Nelly stood before us; it appeared that she had followed Lady Eastville to the door, with the intention of making excuses, but not finding the opportunity, had remained there, closely observing and listening. Being no longer able to command her fury, I

cried out: "My Lady, only listen to me; it is a shame for you," she added, addressing me, "after all the trouble you have given in the house, to be finding fault and abusing a poor servant who has no other dependance."

"This is intolerable," exclaimed Clara, rising and commanding her to retire.

"Let her first hand me my crutch," said I, who was rather amused at witnessing Nell's fury. As she handed it to me she muttered between her teeth, "I wish your leg might break in two; and so you are my Lady's cousin? Well that is strange!"

"Still loitering here," said Lady Eastville, "go instantly and send Mrs. Waller." She retired grumbling, and Clara again resumed her place near the couch: she sat on a low seat so as to watch more attentively Herbert's breathing. I placed myself on a chair opposite to them, then with the simple benevolence that had ever marked her character, she arranged cushions to support my leg, after which for some time we remained silent. She had cast aside her bonnet and pelisse, and as she half reclined against the arm of the couch, with her long hair thrown back, her soft eyes anxiously fixed on Herbert, and her cheeks glowing with maternal affection, methought I had never seen her look so lovely, and I turned my

head aside that she should not observe my gaze of rapture.

After a time she broke silence, saying : "Freville, will you not be glad to see Waller again ? When my marriage took place I sent for her to Wales, and it would be hard to say which of us felt most happy at the reunion."

"Is it possible, Lady Eastville," I answered, "that it is your old nursery governess or housekeeper that has now the care of your children ? Strange that when I heard the name it did not occur to me ; and how kind of you in your prosperity to think of past friends !"

"Kinder than you, Freville !" she answered in a playful tone, "when you call me Lady Eastville and not Clara. But in remembering old friends the kindness is to myself, for it promotes my happiness, for they are associated in my mind with my dear father, Cader Idris, and all the bright hours of childhood. No, I never can forget the friends of my youth ; and then you know, Freville, or you ought to know, that my ideas of happiness were always domestic, and amidst the prosperity to which you allude, I find my greatest charm in my affections, for Egbert's love is more valuable to me than all his treasures of fine places, houses, and their adjuncts."

I bit my lips to smother a sigh, and as I must say something, observed, "I thought it was a Mr. Lascelles you married *so soon* after my departure from England." I laid a great emphasis on the words *so soon*, but she did not notice it, and merely replied, "Sir Egbert and Mr. Lascelles are one and the same; some other day you shall have the particulars. And now let me ask where is your beautiful and beloved Aigline Tennant?"

"Married like yourself, Clara," I replied in a tone of agitation.

"Oh! dear Freville, I am sorry," she said soothingly, "I feared you were unhappy from your looks."

I interrupted her, petulantly, exclaiming, "For Heaven's sake, do not again speak to me in this manner of Miss Tennant—she never was my love." She smiled incredulously, and put her finger to her lip to imply silence; at the instant Mrs. Waller entered. I greeted her with much pleasure, and in an under voice we talked and laughed at Clara's being a mother, "And this little fellow," said she, "is the pet."

"I fear so," answered Clara. "And now, Waller, carry him to my room."

"I would not, on any account, disturb him from that sleep," was the answer; "besides, my

apprehensions, but spoke kindly, and said she feared that from the confusion and anxiety that reigned in the house, I must be cruelly neglected. Well, two days more passed, and Herbert was pronounced out of danger, and Jerold ordered that on the following day he should be removed to my sitting room for change of air.

"Besides," said he, "now that from my long sojourn at the Terrace I shall be so hurried, having my two patients together will save time—nothing like killing two birds at one throw."

Thus, without any effort on my part, by circumstances the most simple and natural, and over which I had no control, I was thrown into the society of my beloved Clara,—our intercourse rendered more interesting by the sympathy we mutually felt for the child.

Days passed quietly on. Oh ! how impatiently I watched for the hour when Clara, carrying a basket and her work, followed by Waller and Herbert, came to take up her station in my room, generally remaining with me till the dinner hour ; occasionally she would be called away to receive the numerous visitors who came to inquire after the children. This was a sad annoyance, but I was consoled when I heard her pronounce such constant intrusion a great bore. I often pressed her to dine in my apartment, but this

she declined, observing that Sir Egbert was so particular in the regulations of his establishment, that he never permitted the least innovation in the forms of etiquette, and that even when alone she sat down to table surrounded with the style of a duchess, and had the comfort of a fat butler and a pair of tall footmen observing with what appetite she ate. Once or twice she invited me to join her and abscond from my cell, as she playfully called my apartment; but I declined, for if once I went through the house I knew I should have less of her company, and so persisted that Doctor Jerold had advised me not to move; however, inconsistently enough, I admitted that I was able to walk upon the Terrace, though I still required the assistance of my crutch.

The autumnal evenings were delicious, and when Herbert sunk into sleep, Clara would accompany me, pluck for me the most beautiful flowers, and with her father's skill explain their properties; but all this she did with the simple tenderness she used to shew her reverend parent; all idea and recollection of my past love seemed to have faded from her memory. Alas! these days—these walks—this solitary intercourse, revived in my mind the passion of my early years. Aware of its hopelessness I sunk into a profound melancholy, which communicated itself to my manners

cheer and amuse me, thus innocently
ing my cursed passion; and now my
tion, always so vivid, began to busy itself.
urious to discover whether her union with
bert had been one of convenience or affec-
ed I indulged the hope that it might have
e former, and that the love which I flat-
yself she had from childhood experienced
was only subdued, not conquered.

ersonal advantages I considered myself far
r to Sir Egbert, and overlooking his high
tual powers, of which to say truth I was
ery incompetent to form a just estimate,
ed myself up with the recollection that
women of taste had been captivated by
hionable manners and easy address, and
ellish and others of my brother officers,
med me the irresistible. I ought to blush
nowledge such folly; but as I have not

tired of her company if she turned eg when I persisted in my importunities honest simplicity, which for the time called all my hopes, she avowed her strong affection for Sir Egbert at the period of her union, :

“That affection has daily increased knowledge of his many noble qualities sportively added, “from what you, Freville, consider a capricious cause, that in trifling ways, which admit of no description, reminds me of my ever to be remembered father. Then, in his carriage and both of which I know are too formal in fancy, he is so like Mr. Aylsbury, whose marriage was my beau-ideal of manly beauty. Nay, Freville, do not look so fierce, Lady Gertrude was my friend, and made me she kept me from my rest while she dwelt on his perfections, so, perhaps, I on him by reflection.”

I felt provoked and mortified, and as I observed, “Mr. Aylsbury, no doubt, a excellent person; but positively, Clara, your beau-ideal of manly beauty is perfectly false; a man is downright plain in his appearance. Sir Egbert is better-looking.”

“Even,” she repeated gaily; “but ever saucy, Freville, it may be bad to

prosy—so we will, with your leave, subject.”

it,” said I, pointing to Herbert who was about, “you are proud enough of appearance.”

I was out of humour, and without the cause, wished to soothe me, so pointing her finger, she answered :

“You vain man, it was but yesterday that I told you to me, ‘ Well, my Lady, surely never so like a father as Master Herbert is to Mr. Hurst, and he is so unlike you and me.’ ”

“Do you think him like me, Clara ?” I asked with emotion.

“No,” she exclaimed, and raising him in her arms, she stroked his head, saying, “This hair is like the raven’s, and these eyes are so like mine.”

“The conversation afforded me little pleasure.”



acquirements. I wished, indeed, to construe *the* kisses she lavished on Herbert, at the moment she commented on his resemblance to me, to incipient feelings of regard ; but, alas ! even my egregious vanity could not be so self-deceived.

The morning after this conversation had occurred, Doctor Jerold came to the Terrace, and remained until evening. Clara, as was usual with her, was very cheerful, but I felt dissatisfied, languid, and depressed ; the Doctor imputing my too evident dejection to the solitary life I led, benevolently requested of me to accompany him back, observing that as he was a bachelor he would allow me to make his house my own, and entertain as many of my brother officers as I pleased, on the condition that I kept my leg quiet. A pang of anguish shot through my heart at the idea of leaving Clara, still I was going to accept the invitation, when she abruptly said :

“ At all events, Mr. Deerhurst, do not think of going until Sir Egbert returns. I will write to him to-morrow to hasten back ; you must not quit the Terrace with a gloomy opinion of it ; now that you and Herbert are well, I purpose being very gay ; besides, I must introduce you to my little girl and elder son,” on saying these words she quitted the apartment.

“ I see there is no chance of your accompanying

1 my claim ; and now, farewell ; when-
here, I am sure to loiter away my time.''
less to say with what pleasure I con-
stay, enhanced as it was by the secret
Clara's invitation proceeded from a
ing than mere hospitality. In a few
bert's answer arrived ; he said it would
le for him to return to the Terrace for
ee weeks, but requested that I would
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my attention to Herbert, of which he
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gain, I was left to the uninterrupted
of Clara's company ; but the pleasure
ed by the knowledge that when Sir
ie back, I could not with any propriety
yself any longer as an inmate in his
following my father's reckless maxim



ing by what means I could most delicately to her how much I loved, without stating prejudices—for such, in the profundity of folly, I considered her exalted views of religion. Surely mine was then a demerit to try by every artifice to seduce the noble-minded Clara from her husband and children—her God—to hurl her from a high state to the abyss of shame, and misery, And for what? Merely to gratify my own views; and yet I dared to shelter my weakness under the name of sentiment—of an unconquerable passion; and to defend myself by dwelling on the frequency of the crime. The strongest argument, except to my unreflecting mind, was the strongest proof against it, as it demonstrated the terrible effects of evil example, and the necessity of checking such licentiousness.

Although I was sufficiently well to leave my apartment, I still continued in it under

led from the violence of my uncon-
selings, and the terrible conflict of my
y sufferings were depicted in my coun-
Lady Eastville perceived it, as she now
y pallid cheeks, and then saw them
scarlet; a pang shot through her heart,
attached to me with a sister's love,—
ing that consumption was hereditary in
r's family, she apprehended I was
with it, and privately sent off an
Doctor Jerold. When I discovered
much annoyed, even the proof it gave
rest did not reconcile me, for I began
that every one must observe my
id as the Doctor was very quick and
ve, I dreaded his discernment; how-
his point I had nothing to fear. He
at very evening at the Terrace: pro-
ne to be in a slow nervous fever;
at I might be kept as quiet as possible,
mused; ordered the windows of my
m to be kept open till the close of the
hen gaily observed to Lady Eastville,
could not spare his time to humour
riacs, he deputed the care of me to
erbert. Being about going to York,
ce he could not return for a week or

two, and considering me worse than I really was, he privately gave Lady Eastville many directions, admitting that my illness showed some symptoms of hectic fever; above all things he requested my spirits might be supported. Thus circumstances combined to nourish my passion, and propel the unfortunate Clara on to ruin.

There is no possibility of conveying to the mind of another the numerous devices by which I strove to inspire the pure mind of Clara with my detestable love. I assailed her through her best and noblest affection:—I would affect head-ache, and speak of approaching consumption, that with trembling fingers she might bathe my temples with sal-volatile, or bring me some cooling draught. I would hush Herbert to sleep on my bosom, entwining his arms round my neck, that when her anxious tenderness wished to remove him from the air without awakening, she should stoop over me and disengage him from my embrace. All this time, reclining on the couch, I would appear quite passive as if overcome with lassitude, though truly “the strong blast of hell with restless fury drove my spirit on.” Often would I engage her in long conversations about her father—a theme her filial heart never tired of. Good old man, thy hallowed memory was drawn

the silent tomb to assist towards the ruin of
beloved daughter !

When the night closed in, and the beautiful
chapel without was lighted by the harvest
moon, knowing the powers of music, I would
draw forth from my flute the softest, most im-
mortal airs, or sing the songs of infancy till the
tears streamed down her eyes ; and sometimes
she would beg of me to desist, for the memory of
her mother, and the Parsonage, and old Cader Idris
were painfully vivid. If any of the attendants
saw me I complained of irritation of my nerves,
she gravely observed, that I was aware of being
an umbrance or intruder. Accustomed from
childhood to attend upon and soothe the suffer-
ings of others, incapable under any circumstances
of selfishness, with an angel's goodness she
obeyed all my whims. Still she sometimes
rebuked me for indulging my irritable
temper, as she apprehended, if not controlled in
time it might become habitual, and render me
incapable. Viewing me as the companion of
childhood, her near relation, and my being the
person who was connected in her mind
with the past days, she treated me with all the
tenderness and confidence of an affectionate sister.
She was as one of her own children, the very idea

an evening when she was about to
of Sir Egbert's tenantry in the immedia
to which she was very attentive—on
the room, I would call her back, and
ask her to read some passages in the Bi
the look of delight with which she wai
other employment in the blessed hop
ning me to holy thoughts. Although s
voice for singing, her reading was quite m
and when speaking upon religious subj
was an expression of enthusiasm in he
nance which lighted up her delicate featu
very perfection of beauty. Of all the
have ever seen, Clara was the most truly
She seemed the very creation of heav
spirit was of God—was with God ; how
be otherwise, for from the source of re
ligion she imbibed the waters of life ! I
hour she would read to me, commenting
passage she thought most likely to awal

"See, Freville, I do not forget my old
ment of housekeeping, so I rose early
orning to have this jelly seasoned in the
: you were wont to approve of at the
age. There, Freville, do you remember
refully I was obliged to lock up all
etmeats, lest they should suddenly disap-
hen you came in hungry from the keen
ie mountains?" She would then playfully
e to eat, and remind me of all the assist-
ad, in boyhood, given her in domestic af-
d in catechizing the children. To my
d imagination, these reminiscences of our
asure seemed to result from a deep, though
passion.

Eastville was still more beautiful as a
than she had been in her girlish days;
proportions of her frame were more fully
ed, and the expression of her countenance
re intellectual. In dress she was much the
the materials might be finer, the fashions
t; but still the white robe and blue ribbons
e constant costume; and the luxuriant hair
the same Madonna fashion. When at my
she would by night kneel at the side of my
o pray, with her bright child beside her, I do
ie genius of sculpture or painting never im-
a more perfect spectacle; and yet so great

a wretch was I, that my sole ambition was to usurp the place of all goodness in her bosom. My conduct at this period seemed to illustrate the strange belief entertained by some of the earliest Christians, that the rebellious spirits who had been degraded from angels, were occasionally permitted to roam upon earth, assuming the forms of sinful men, and thus endowed with terrible power to seduce the virtuous from their trust in heaven.

The most sublime of English poets has represented Lucifer as being so over-awed by the graceful innocence of Eve, as to hesitate in his dire work of destruction; but the baser spirit that rules the libertine, bent on its own sensual gratification, pauses not in its dire purport. What to him is the breach of hospitality, the loss of innocence, or the disgrace of a family? put in competition with his grovelling passions. Perhaps my profound selfishness cannot be placed in a stronger light than by acknowledging that on several evenings I had caught glimpses of the bloated visage of Nelly Dudgeon, peeping through the night-fall through the blinds. There was always a sneering expression on the lips of the footman who brought in my meals, when he would sometimes say: "My Lady requests, Mr. Deerhurst,

that you will partake of these," handing me some rarity.

I was not at a loss to construe all this. It fretted me to think Clara was suspected by the menial crew; still, far from acquainting her with my observations, I trembled lest she might discover the suspicions of her servants. I knew her delicacy would be shocked and alarmed, and that no arts, no sophistry would influence her to continue our intercourse, which on her side was the result of early habit, and a purity of sentiment unacquainted with guilt; besides, she had too much sense to despise opinion. She knew she owed a duty to society at large, more especially to those who formed her family, and might be influenced by her example.

It may be asked if my knowledge of her virtue was so exalted, and her conduct so irreproachable, upon what hope I founded my plans of seduction? To this I can give no reasonable answer, so repeat the well known lines :

None without hope ere loved the brightest fair,
But love will hope where reason would despair.

One day Clara said to me: "Freville, if I thought you were sincere in the affection you express for my dear father's memory, I would shew you a miniature I have painted of him."

I reproached her for doubting my
"Oh! Freville," she answered, in
between gay and serious, "latterly you
some degree lessened my confidence
stroyed much of the pleasure I find in
pany by your eternally tormenting me
compliments. No doubt they are very
soldier-like; but between such near re
say the least, they are very absurd. I
a bad, nay, a vulgar substitute for the
of our natural sentiments. And now, I
usurping a sister's authority, and a ma
dom"—and she gave one of her angel s
am lecturing you, believe me that the
which you so often assume destroys
of your naturally fine eyes. I assure y
have been frequently quite uncomfort
your fixed regards."

As she spoke, a sickness passed over
felt that the least advance would be th
off of our intimacy; and so madly did
that the most painful death conveyed
of such despair as living to be sepa
her.

The ghastly expression my count
sumed, shocked her. Full of the nob
bility, she shrank from inflicting pain
Freville," she said in a tone of gentlene

not mean to wound your feelings ; forgive me for having done so."

I tried to laugh, and answered : " Clara, you make no allowance for a military air ; however, in future I will school my looks to the primness of a miss in her teens, if it so please you. Now say how you, who I thought had never been taught to draw, could from your memory paint a miniature of your father ?"

She replied with vivacity : " Love performs miracles ; you know how tenderly I always loved my poor old father, and when it pleased heaven to deprive him of sight, his patience, his piety, his cheerfulness under the terrible affliction, doubly endeared him to me."

She paused to recover her emotion, for tears fell down her face. " Freville," she then said, " it has ever been my good fortune to be blessed in my immediate friends. Sir Egbert, having frequently seen me attempt a likeness of my father, from a masterly sketch your mother had drawn in the old family bible, and being always solicitous to gratify my every whim, advised me to take some lessons in painting, and generously took me to London for the purpose. My master, who, like you, Freville, could flatter, vowed I was born to be a first-rate artist ; and when you see miniatures I have taken of Sir Egbert and the children,

lence in any pursuit."

"I was not a gallant soldier then, (answered gaily; "but shew me the picture that recal my praise."

"Oh, they are kept by Sir Egbert as his treasures. You must know, though, as he retains all the romance of a lover."

I sighed from very envy and jealousy, no reply.

"But, Freville, be a saucy boy again, with the plain unvarnished truth; and say you think of this?"—with these words she drew from her bosom a miniature, fastened round her neck with a chain of my mother's hair. It was an admirable and highly-finished likeness of what I had called the old man's memory. I pressed it to my lips gratefully, for it was warm from her bosom. Calling this as a compliment to her father, she was much pleased. Hastening from the an-

red me the sketch taken by my mother. I pointed out all the marginal notes, some written at the period of her own mother's and others dictated by Mr. Arnheim, after of sight. They were full of genius and the sublime poetry of true piety. Wellocrisy now brought into play this holy as another auxiliary for detaining Clara in ber,—for my hope of gaining her love was fading.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER week passed on in the usual and then a letter arrived from Sir Egbert he hoped to be at the Terrace on the following but one. He was then staying in the hospital his little girl, who Doctor Jerold considered with safety accompany him back, and a change of air would recruit her strength which was much debilitated.

On receiving this letter, Clara bounded into her room with a look of brilliant happiness. "I will gratulate me, Freville; my beloved and little girl will be with me to-morrow. The first days must be exclusively devoted to her, we shall have so much to say after

frantic at her undisguised rapture, a momentary madness seized me. I uttered a cry, made a spring towards her. As well as I can now recal the fearful sentiment, I had some idea of crushing her to death; anything to keep her from my rival. Fortunately, most fortunately, I staggered, and fell back in a fit.

She knelt by my side, called loudly for assistance, and in a few moments I was restored, but languid and exhausted from my mind's agony. My illness awakened no suspicion, for the preceding evening I had complained of being very feverish, and spoke of my death as a coming event, just to detain her near me; and yet, in saying I was ill, there was no deception, for the constant agitation of my mind was attended with a hectic, which was rapidly undermining my strength. When restored from my fit I cried out: "Leave me, Lady Eastville, leave me! prepare for your Lord's return. I am ill, and dying, and cannot be expected to join in your transports of love and happiness."

"Oh! Freville," she said, and her tears fell on my burning face, "mar not my joy by the grievous idea of your being in danger. Doctor Jerold will be here, and then you will soon be well again."

"Leave me," I exclaimed fiercely, "if you would not drive me to madness—to hell!"

She shuddered and retired; in a quarter of an

hour after Mrs. Waller entered with a cold draught, which poor Clara, thinking I was prepared. She found me more calm. On my urgent request I took the anodyne. She laid me on the couch, drew the window curtain, and soon fell into a slumber, from which I awoke tranquil, but exquisitely miserable. Mrs. Waller that day attended with my dinner, consisting of light delicacies, and soon afterwards Clara came with Herbert. Tortured by my miserable condition I was peevish and ill-tempered. At first she tried to soothe me, and then gravely rebuked me for want of patience.

"My dear Freville," she said, "now that Egbert is returning, I shall have less opportunity of lecturing, for when he is here our tastes are so similar we are constant companions; so, by the present opportunity, I must tell you how much I both condemn and grieve at the increase of your temper. Formerly, Freville, although a little too ardent and opinionated, you were nevertheless genial for good humour and a sportive man; but now you are so capricious there is no possibility of pleasing you; and then, when not pleased, you become peevish and desponding. Let me beseech you, in the name of all a sister's love, entreat of you to overcome these defects, which otherwise will mar the noble qualities you possess."

I answered fiercely: "Lady Eastville,

a great stress on a sister's love ; thank heaven, no such relationship exists between us."

Mistaking my object, with her usual gentleness she replied : " Our mothers were sisters, so the relationship is only one step removed. Freville, I did not think you would refuse to acknowledge me."

Abashed by her look of reproach, I answered : " But, Clara, fortune has now placed an impassible gulf between us. You are the lady of a proud Baronet, mistress of this noble mansion, and all its adjuncts of fine carriages, servants, &c. &c., and I am but a poor Lieutenant, who probably must quit even that position for want of means to liquidate debts incurred by stern necessity."

" Freville, I blush for you," she replied, in a tone of indignation I had never before heard her use ; " I blush for you, to lay such a stress on the possession of fortune, setting aside all the nobler, more exalted gifts of nature and religion. Think you, Freville, had Sir Roger Deerhurst appointed you the heir of his oriental treasures, and that Clara Arnheim had remained the dependent and orphan daughter of Mr. Arnheim, that she would have felt herself degraded below you ? Such was not the doctrine we learned from our departed mothers. Descended from the noble houses of Vermani and Villemont, when they were reduced to poverty and compelled to subsist by industry,

attributes of state."

The general expression of Clara's mildness, but on rare occasions, when awakened into enthusiasm, she was so lovely. At that moment I could not have my self-command had I continued to gaze. Leaning my face over the table, I displayed an expression; but a convulsive sigh escaped my overburthened bosom.

Again her too quick sensibility regretted wounded me. "Dear Freville," she said too hard on you; I do not make sufficient allowance for your faded health, or the privation which Sir Roger's persevering cruelty has done you. Alas! it is a sinful world: with all my efforts to be virtuous, to guide my way by religion and the precepts of my pious father, I constantly err. Prosperity has hardened my heart, and in the fulness of my happiness I forget my less fortunate destiny. Forgive me, Freville."

volume (and she laid her hand on it), I expected you would soon be a perfect saint. Then I came here to have a little confidential chat, and to ask your advice; I was disappointed, and then, forsooth, accused you of the very irritability I experienced myself. Say you excuse me," and she reached out her hand.

I caught it in a transport of passion, and pressing it between mine, actually sobbed with the vehemence of a school-boy.

"This is terrible," she said, sitting down on a low stool at my feet; "Freville, I am positive some secret grief oppresses you. This idea has often suggested itself to me, and Dr. Jerold has sanctioned my opinion, by saying much of your late illness proceeded from some mental cause. I will not press for your confidence; circumstances of affliction may have occurred that you would not wish to relate. It may be that the secrets of Aigline Tennant are in connection with your own, and it would not be just or honourable to betray them. But I claim the office of a sincere friend, who would sacrifice much to soothe—to serve you."

I looked sadly in her face, and pressed her soft hand against my throbbing breast, muttering some words of gratitude. She withdrew her hand, and in a voice of touching tenderness continued:

"Freville, you will not permit me to call you

Lady Eastville can forget the kindness
Arnheim received? Well do I remember
lost my father, how, out of your small means
would have supplied all my wants; and
you not, to save me from a dependence
your prouder spirit deemed insupportable
ruin of your fortunes and to the disappoin-
tment of your love, have united your fate to mine
can you now think so slightly of me
demand, nay, command my services?
ville, how cruelly you misjudge me, or
for your mother often said, when you were
child that you inherited a spice of
of Signor Vermani's vindictive spirit, and
my not having invited you to my wedding
keeping our relationship secret from her
and declining your correspondence. Now
this is, in point of fact, the only act
which I severely condemn and regret
know at the period I was solely unde-

city, "entreat your forgiveness for my unmanly violence, and your confidence; as to the sincerity of my love for you, methinks you cannot doubt it."

"I never did, Freville," she answered, with perfect *naïveté*, "and now I must turn egotist, and speak of myself. It matters not what my sentiments were towards Sir Egbert when first I knew him. They bordered a little too much on respect, and a conscious inferiority, for Lady Aylsbury, who had just sense enough to appreciate his value, and was most proud of having such a nephew, for months ere he returned to England had been amusing her friends with an account of his superior talents, the court he was paid in all the first societies in Europe, the magnificent collection of paintings and articles of *virtù* he had collected; and for this she prudently condemned him, as he had incumbered his fortune—at the period not exceeding fifteen hundred a year—to gratify his taste for the fine arts. Observe, I had been married two years when Sir Egbert, by the death of three persons, all younger than himself, came in for his baronetcy and the large estates now in his possession, with no obligation but that of taking the name of Eastville. To return to myself. As you may conclude, I considered the much-vaunted nephew of Lady Aylsbury as a very great personage. So impressed was I with this idea, that on our first

acquaintance I felt a restraint in his presence actually amounting to awe. However, when Lady Aylsbury got seriously ill, he was so attentive to her, and showed so much real good feeling that I soon ceased to fear, and learned to love him. Not to tire your patience, the proud, the fastidious, the accomplished Mr. Lancelles, to the surprise of all who knew him, proposed for Clara, Lady Aylsbury's humble dependent; it is needless to say I accepted him. So far all was well; but I shall ever look back with regret for having yielded to Lady Aylsbury's request, and never mentioned your name to him—you, who were my nearest, I might say only relative; for, until I became Sir Egbert's bride, the haughty Villemonts never deigned notice me."

"Then, Clara," I said, "it was at Lady Aylsbury's request you declined all correspondence with me. What could be her motive?"

Blushing scarlet, she answered: "Lady Aylsbury, who is a strange compound, is a great romancer, and delights in imagining love scenes for others. She had heard a vast deal of you from the Plinlimmons, and chose to fancy that you and I must of a necessity be lovers. Insincere to a degree in her own manners, she places little belief in the truth of others. In vain I assured her all the attachment we experienced toward

each other was that of a brother and sister ; and that you had been impelled to propose for me, not from passion, but a noble wish to relieve me from dependence. She insisted on knowing my sentiments better than I did myself ; and, as she really behaved in the most friendly and generous manner, on Sir Egbert's, then Mr. Lascelles's, proposal, I weakly yielded to her advice, and for the first time stooped to the meanness of deception."

I replied coldly, " I should think there was no great deception in not speaking to Sir Egbert of a person he never knew, nor do I see any cause of regret."

" It was a want of confidence," she replied with vivacity ; " and see the result. By his letter of to-day I perceive Sir Egbert is surprised and evidently annoyed at hearing, for the first time, that I have so near a relative."

" You then wrote him word of our relationship ?" I exclaimed.

" Yes, in my last letter. In my two first I alluded to nothing but Herbert's danger ; the subject was so engrossing I could think of nothing else."

I made no reply, and she continued to speak with an energy very unlike her usual tranquil manner.

" Lady Aylsbury was perfectly right in forbidding our future correspondence. It was also kind

of her to advise me to assume a grave and distant manner than was natural to me, acquaint me with the proud and jealous of Sir Egbert. To say truth, Freville, the and simple manners of my early friends neighbourhood of Cader Idris were little calculated to make me suppose any evil passions could be imputed to a free and friendly intercourse of our acquaintances. Alas! for the corrupt society, how much of good it deprives the world of.

“Sir Egbert then,” I demanded, “is so jealous temper?”

“Beyond belief,” she answered. “It is the shade that dims his character, in other respects exalted. But for this there is every excuse in the first instance he is so ardent in his attachments, which are concentrated in a few, the whole happiness is placed in those he loves. the ill conduct of his own mother who, after ten years married, eloped from his father with the profligate John Fitzwilliam, so famous in the turf, has left an evil impression of our sex on his mind.”

“Clara, I was not aware of the circumstances.”

“It is seldom spoken of,” she answered. “The deserted husband, the criminal wife, and the gate seducer, are all dead—it was a terrible tragedy. I will not speak more fully of it.”

Aylsbury, who confided the fearful secret to me, has obtained my promise on that head." As she spoke she turned deadly pale, and shuddered. After a time she added: "Lady Aylsbury, though but his step-aunt, and so many years his senior, on Egbert being left an orphan, acted towards him as the most judicious and best of parents."

I said I should not have supposed that possible from what I heard of the frivolity of her manners and pursuits.

"It is hard to judge of others," she replied carelessly. "She has some fine qualities, though they are nearly lost in the multitude of contemptible ones; however, I could overlook all but her deception."

"Was Sir Egbert ever jealous of you?" I demanded.

She answered indignantly, "What an idea! Knowing his temper, even had I been the vainest coquette, I would instantly have adapted my manners to his views; duty, independent of affection, would have impelled me to it. Jealous of me! Why, Freville, since we married I was never so long separated from him as now, except once; I think about three years ago, when I spent some months in the neighbourhood of Chatham with Lady Aylsbury. And a melancholy time I had of it, for she was confined for nearly the whole period with rheumatism. Sir Egbert was obliged to go

to Scotland, on account of a law-suit. Positively though little used to indulge *ennui*, I should have died of the vapours, for my little ones were not with me, but for Janet Owen; you remember the Doctor's pretty daughter who lived in Plinlimmon, and was such a playfellow of ours? Well, she married a Mr. Onslow, a merchant; and though I knew Sir Egbert's ancestral blood would rise at the very idea of his lady forming an intimacy so little aristocratic, still I spent many an evening with Janet."

"Then," said I smiling, "you kept a second secret from Sir Egbert?"

"No, Freville. On his return I told him, and although he took some capricious dislike to Janet, he assisted in getting her husband, who was very poor, some situation in America; and Janet is now residing in New York, and gaily mentioned in her last letter, that she liked it better than England's more ancient city—"

She paused, for we heard a noise as if some person had stumbled near the door. "Who waits?" called out Clara. There was no answer. She rose, and opened the door. I saw a form flit past the window. Clara returned, and said carelessly:

"Do you know, Freville, I have a very ill opinion of Nelly Dudgeon. Waller never ventures to speak to me without first looking whether she is in the passage leading to my apartment. I

hope she did not hear what I said of Sir Egbert's mother ; for, however guilty or unfortunate, her memory is so dear to him he cannot endure to have her mentioned. Indeed, all connected with her is now buried in oblivion."

While she was speaking, the dressing bell rang. Taking Herbert by the hand she retired, observing with great gentleness : " You must not expect me this evening, Freville, for I must walk down to the hamlet to see about orders Sir Egbert is solicitous to have executed."

I was going to speak, but playfully waiving her hand, she hurried off, saying : " I will not be coaxed."

I did not see her again until the following evening. Twice during the day she sent Herbert with kind messages to say I must excuse her, as she was engaged preparing for Sir Egbert and her little girl. I knew the former, although in many respects so amiable, was fastidious to peevishness in his tastes. The morning passed away slowly and sadly. I felt that Sir Egbert's return would deprive me of Clara's company. I knew that if any incipient jealousy was awakened, I could on no pretence prolong my stay ; my separation then from Clara, was certain, immediate ; the thought was accompanied by a depth of anguish to which no expression can do justice, and to which the

regret I felt, when obliged to part from Cader Idris, was but as a shadow. I hoped circumstances would again, perhaps, unite us. Even my grief, of her marriage, was calm to the degree which my guilty and hopeless passion had excited me. But in this detail it is not to dwell upon the struggles I endured, which answer no object. Human sympathy could not awaken it—would afford no relief to my wounded spirit. One by one my idols have crumbled to dust before me, and one object has been the only tie which I have to earth, and my reason tells me, that she may be the source of my happiness. I will seek and find his in other objects, as it should be, and drives on my heart to seek its only anchorage in her.

It was about six in the afternoon that Lady Eastville, accompanied by Herbert, entered my apartment:—"I am come to spend some time with you, Freville," she said, in a tone of softness; and methought her countenance sad and subdued.

"While I thank you for your trouble, Lady Eastville," I answered, in a low tone, "forgive me if I say it was not my fault, entirely neglect the heart-broken man who, probably, will never again spend

society; for, even were I to intrude here any longer, you will be too happily engaged with Sir Egbert and your children, to spare your time to me, who, in truth, may be said to be merely an object of your charity."

"This, to me, Freville," she said, soothingly; "but I will not reproach you, for you are unhappy, nor will I deceive you, as I before remarked. Sir Egbert acts the lover, and in all his rides and walks I accompany him; however, I hope to enjoy much of your society. Doctor Jerold is to attend my little girl here, and I have no doubt that he will exert his authority, and oblige you to quit your cell, and join us in the general sitting-rooms."

I felt miserable and dissatisfied, and haughtily answered:—"No, Lady Eastville, I feel that I am an intruder. Thrown by circumstances on Sir Egbert's hospitality, it is my intention to accept of Doctor Jerold's invitation, and quit the Terrace to-morrow; for, to say truth, I do not feel able to join my corps." Angels of mercy! why did she, then, with that melodious voice, whose every tone sunk into my heart, commiserate my illness? Why did she press me to stay, and add to the happiness of her domestic circle by my presence? And how could I for a moment impute the tenderness that emanated from benevolence

and affection, to a passion furious as I consumed me? But all originated in my and deeply-cursed vanity."

"Mamma, Lady Cora is come," Herbert, bounding in through the wind

"Freville, come and look at Sir Egbert," said Clara, as she stepped out on her race walk; "I assure you this is the best I am jealous of," and she pointed to a mare of dappled grey.

I had never seen any horse of such form. Supported by my stick, I stepped to admire it, and speak to the groom. He told me it was a famous racer, and that it had refused nine hundred guineas for that it was so obedient to his hand, that he could guide it with a silken rein, but that he could not venture to ride it. Soon after I went into the room, and observed Clara sitting on the sofa and looking very pensive. She started up without speaking hurried away. An hour or so and she returned with her bonnet on.

"You must accompany me, Freville," "to see some beautiful plants Sir Egbert knows my love for flowers, has formed in London all strangers to Britain's climate must be very tender of them."

I rose to accompany her.

am so glad you can move without crutches," he, smiling. "As to your stick, you look graceful with it."

passed through a spacious hall hung with pictures, representing sylvan scenes, and at into a magnificent saloon opening into conservatories. Every thing bespoke wealth, and by good taste.

The library is the most elegant apartment in use," said Clara, who was pleased at my opinion; "but as it is up stairs, I will not show you to see it, lest it might fatigue your ascent. Then I have a boudoir, Freville, would suit an Eastern Princess. Strange indeed to place Clara Arnheim, who thought it a thing to get a few yards of blue ribbon, the head of all this grandeur, and with nothing but to recommend her!"

What thing on earth to recommend you?" I exclaimed, as I gazed on her exquisite beauty.

"Fine speeches," she added, as she passed from the conservatory to the Terrace walk, which extended to a great length.

For some time we observed silence. Clara seemed embarrassed by it, and attempted to enter into general conversation; spoke of the flowers, the exotics, of Lady Cora, in short, of any subject she could think of, and looked

disappointed when in reply I uttered monosyllables. For the life of me I could not converse on topics of indifference, while my whole being was engrossed with my ill-fated Clara. However, as we strolled up and down—for I refused to quit the walk—I occasionally stopped to remark on some of the plants, then she would pluck their blossoms, and present them to me, and thus another hour passed, and the depression of my spirits every moment increased. My melancholy seemed infectious, and Clara's cheerfulness gradually faded away. She became as sad and pensive as myself. Complaining the dew was falling, she proposed returning to my apartment, and I readily assented.

On entering we found Herbert jumping in high glee, which I perceived originated in the table being covered with some rare fruit and sweetmeats, in addition to my usual coffee and biscuits.

"I could see no just cause, Freville," said Lady Eastville, gaily, "why you should not be in for some of the good things. Do not mind these rustic preparations, and the vases of flowers remind you of the dear Parsonage? Conclude on the couch, you look fatigued. He shall be the attendant page, and I the Lady of the mount, doing the honours of my banquet."

I tried to look pleased, said I was too w

require the couch, and, sitting down beside her, attempted to partake of the delicacies before me, and to speak on general topics. In this effort I was assisted by Herbert, who now twined his arms round his mother's neck; then bounding from her, caressed me, and so on, till exhausted by the flow of his spirits, he nestled his dark head into her bosom, and fell into a deep sleep. For some time she remained silent, fondly gazing on him; then in a low voice, as if apprehensive of awakening him, she said :—

“Now, Freville, I must renew the subject I commenced yesterday. I do not ask why you are unhappy, but I request, nay entreat of you to acquaint me, can I be of the least service to you? I need not again expatiate on your claims or my feelings; credit me when I say, that to have it in my power to alleviate your present sorrow, from whatever source it originates, would confer upon me the greatest pleasure. Nay, do not interrupt me with thanks. On this head I am selfish; for how could Clara Arnheim be at rest while Freville Deerhurst was in affliction?”

I pressed the hand she had laid upon mine, to prevent my speaking too passionately, to my lips. She started, flushed scarlet, then grew deadly pale. I should think some suspicion of my sentiments towards her, for the first time, flashed across her mind, and she bent her head

lowly over the sleeping child, to disguise her confusion. Witnessing all this, I fancied it argued well to my hopes of meeting a return, and I gloried at the wild thought of yet conquering her virtue. Still supporting Herbert in her arms, she rose from her seat, and, before I was aware of her intention, rung the bell. A footman entered.

"Remove the coffee," she said, "and light the lamps; but if Mr. Deerhurst does not apprehend the night air, you need not close the curtains. The twilight is beautiful," she added, as she stood by the open casement.

The attendant retired.

"I shall put Herbert to bed," she said, approaching the door.

I felt that I had alarmed her delicacy, and that her countenance and manners were unusually grave; wishing to re-assure her, and draw her back, even for a few solitary moments, in a tone of as much indifference as I could assume, I said, "Will you not delay a few moments, Clara, till I explain the cause of a dejection, which willingly I would never have betrayed to your notice." She hesitated, looked doubtful. I proudly exclaimed, "Nay, Lady Eastville, let me not detain you. Yet it was ungenerous to press for my confidence and then deride it. But, alas! no human mind ever yet withstood the influence of prosperity. Our different lots have destroyed your sympathy."

it has pleased Heaven to shower upon you all the blessings of this life, health, beauty, wealth, children, while I am left to struggle with all the pangs of disappointed affection, and to the mortification of being reduced, by poverty, to appear mean and shabby in my regiment, like my poor father. Although the lawful heir of unbounded wealth, by the unnatural cruelty of Sir Roger I am deprived almost of the means of existence. Worse again! I am involved in debts incurred by the necessary expenses attending on change of quarters, and being sent at the caprice of the Horse Guards from one clime to another. However, regrets are unavailing; our regiment is under orders for India, and I hope soon to find beneath a tropical sun that grave I now so ardently wish for. If, under these circumstances, for a moment I forget the respect due to Lady Eastville, I can only humbly entreat pardon for my presumption."

I saw her hesitate, but her gentle forgiving nature could not long retain anger or suspicion; so, laying Herbert on the couch, she laid her hand on my shoulder—for I sat with my elbows resting on the table, and my face buried in my hands—and addressed me in a voice full of compassion:

"Freville, I cannot endure that you should yield to this melancholy. I am certain you will

yet be a rich man. It is not possible that Sir Roger can live much longer; and credit me, he is not so barbarous as to leave you unprovided for. Perhaps I was too irritable in feeling, too angry with you; but, indeed, your manner was too ardent. Let us mutually forgive each other; you know at the Parsonage we often had affronts, and so forth, and soon made up again—am I forgiven?"

Had I obeyed the impulse of the moment, I should have flung myself at her feet, and kissed the ground she trod; but I affected to be sublime, just to hear her pleading accents. Heaven is my witness at the instant I had no other motive. Raising my head, I looked coldly at her, and in a tone of dignity said, "How could the proud Lady Eastville offend the humble Deerhurst, who again apologises for daring to presume too much on her kindness? However, to-morrow I shall quit the Terrace; in a few days join my regiment so ——," the thoughts of parting from her were too painful; my affected composure fled again. Burying my face in my hands, a groan escaped me. I saw her shudder, then she drew a chair, and sat beside me, and in low impressive accents said

"Freville, I no longer press your stay; perhaps" and she certainly sighed, "it is as well for us all that you should go. Your temper is very ardent, and I think irritable; and it now

occurs to me that, considering you as a brother, pitying your misfortunes, and, chance having thrown you under my protection, perhaps, I have devoted more of my time, and been more familiar with you than Sir Egbert would approve. The very idea of annoying him frets me, for I love him to excess — more, I think, than I ought to love any created being. Altogether, Freville, I feel restless and unhappy when Sir Egbert asks why I never mentioned you to him. If I say Lady Aylsbury, from a suspicion of our being attached, prevented me, it will fire his jealous temper to madness; in short, a presentiment of coming evil has cast its shadow over my soul! Pray with me to heaven to avert it!"

I was too much agitated to reply. After a time she proceeded:—

"You can quit here with Doctor Jerold to-morrow: he is one of the most amiable of men, and will treat you with all hospitality. In a short time, when you are quite recovered, I am certain Sir Egbert will seek your company; and if you are fond of hunting, you can command any of his hunters—all famous, except my Lady Cora, her I do not promise."

My unreasonable temper was provoked at her advising my departure, though I had resolved on it, and I hastily answered, "You are very good, polite, I should say; but, if my embarrassments

do not compel me to sell my commission—when I see no other alternative but listing as a private soldier—I hope, ere the hunting season, to be far on my way to India.”

She looked reproachfully at me, and said:—
“Oh! Freville,” and burst into tears. At that moment we heard a servant approach; she caught up Herbert, and hurried to the door. “In pity’s sake, Clara,” I exclaimed, springing after her, “say you will see me again this evening. We must forgive each other ere we part—perhaps for ever. Sir Egbert will be here early to-morrow: then adieu to all chance of speaking to you! Leave, oh! leave me not to the remorse of thinking that my ill-temper has displeased, offended you!”

She hesitated, and I placed myself between her and the door.

“Let me pass, Freville, and I will see you this evening, an hour hence, if but for a moment.”

“You promise?”

“I do!”

“Enough, Clara Arnheim never broke her word,” before I finished the last sentence she had vanished.

END OF VOL. I.

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1. *Phragmites australis* (Cav.) Trin. ex Steud.



LIONEL DEERHURST.

VOL. II.





LIONEL DEERHURST;

OR,

FASHIONABLE LIFE

UNDER THE REGENCY.

EDITED

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1846.



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THE DEERHURSTS.

CHAPTER I.

AN hour, in the state of my mind, appeared as an age. I was in a fever of excitement, that communicated itself to my whole frame. I walked up and down the Terrace like one distracted, gazed at my watch incessantly; then would not look at it till I thought the time expired, pulled it out again, and, seeing but half an hour had elapsed, dashed it furiously on the ground. To quench my burning thirst I drank a glass of wine—it was but a glass, but in my weakened state it affected me, increasing my fever—let me say delirium. From very fatigue I flung myself on the couch, and soon fell into an uneasy slumber, through which I preserved a consciousness of surrounding objects, for I felt the rich perfume of the flowers wafted over my throbbing temples by the night air, which rushed in through the open

delicious repose, that an inf
joyed. I started from it as t
eleven; the tedious hour had
just going to rise and shake o
the door opened, and through
I saw Clara enter, and, after g
proach with noiseless steps
which I rested. I was awar
cushion beside it, gazed inten
sighed deeply.

All this time I remained in
throbbing of my heart was so
chest heave as if convulsed.
passed in this way, my agi
ment increasing. Then she h
said:—

“Freville, dear Freville, I f
rest: but it is late, and I must
to you.”

I opened my eyes again

ut preserved silence, my emotions were too violent to admit of speech.

"You are sleeping yet," she said, turning her dove-like eyes on me; "but try to rouse yourself, and listen patiently."

"I am all attention," I replied, sighing deeply.

"Freville, I know you are proud, petulant, and easily offended, but surely you would not take offence from your cousin Clara, your first, dearest, and most sincere friend. You propose leaving here to-morrow, and all earthly enjoyments are so uncertain, it is hard to say when we may meet again;—perhaps, never."

I could no longer command myself, I threw myself at her feet, and uttered cries of convulsive anguish.

"Oh! in pity's sake rise," she exclaimed, "you will destroy your poor broken leg; and besides, I do not like the attitude: rise, or you will oblige me to retire without uttering my request."

She spoke this with kindness, but in a tone of decision. She was calm—had all her senses about her; but I was frantic. Yes! I call all the hosts of heaven to witness, that on that night I was frantic.

"Lady Eastville, what do you require of a wretch like me?" I said, but my voice was deep and unnatural, it seemed to proceed from my throat, and that my parched lips had no power of endurance.

My emotion affected her, she was no longer calm, and she spoke rapidly, saying :

“Freville, ere I express it, say you will grant my request ; be generous, and let no false scruples exist between us. Reflect on the lateness of the hour. There is an impropriety in my being here. You are too friendly—too honourable to detain me. Do you promise ?”

I fell at her knees exclaiming :

“I call heaven to witness, though it were to stake my immortal soul to perdition, I will unhesitatingly grant your request.” She shuddered then in a solemn, stern tone said :

“Freville, this really is awful. You are sinful beyond belief. How can you talk in this manner. Have you no fear of God before your eyes. However, time passes on. I came not here to reproach, but serve you. You have sworn to grant my request, and cannot go back ; here then accept of this sum of money from me : it is needless to add it is solely mine, being the price paid for the furniture of the Parsonage. It will prevent the necessity of your selling your commission, than which nothing could be more ruinous : your mind is too ardent, even if you possessed wealth to be satisfied with a life of idleness. And, O Freville ! with this gift let me hope that you will compose yourself and learn to subdue your temper ; its indulgence must ultimately destroy both your health and respectability.”

As she uttered these last words she drew from her bosom a small embroidered purse, containing, as I afterwards learned, notes to the amount of £300. She was hastily retiring, but I grasped her arm, saying, I would thank her, and when she insisted upon going, I called out :

“At least you shall not move till I see your father’s picture.”

She looked steadily in my face : my flashing eyes and quivering lips terrified her ; she thought me delirious, and made a spring to escape, but I thrust my hand into her bosom and snatched the picture from it—cast it aside ; then falling before her, confessed my ardent, undying love, and in the excess of my guilty madness dared to ask a return.

For some moments she remained immovable, being perfectly horror-struck ; recovering herself she cast on me a look of scorn and abhorrence, which wrought my soul to still greater frenzy, and not deigning to speak, hurried to the door ; but I placed my back against it, and again insulted her with my declarations of love.

“Miserable, lost, abandoned man, how dare you to detain me, and oblige me to listen to your sinful, hateful, confessions ! Shame on you, Freville, to requite Sir Egbert’s hospitality and offend my delicacy by such a disgraceful speech ! How weak and vain you must be to suppose, even

admitting I was void of all dignity and that I could transfer my affections exalted, the noble, Sir Egbert, to a wretched you. From this hour I renounce your name—I deny our relationship; I leave your fate without compassion or interest vile seducer! To-morrow, quit my house contaminated by your presence,—to think whom I loved and confided in as a brother who ever found a home in my father should requite all his goodness by thus wronging me! I pray to heaven that we may never again meet. Dare to prevent my return will alarm the whole family.”

She darted towards the bell; but my father this time had risen to such a height, I felt I was alone possessed. I made a sudden spring savagely entwined my arm round her waist, seeing a fruit knife glitter on the table, I picked it up, and pointing it to her breast said, “Cruel, barbarous woman, mine you were but never again shall my hated rival, Sir Egbert, possess you.”

Almost convulsed with terror, in low accents she said: “Oh, Freville! surely you will not kill Clara Arnheim, the friend and companion of your childhood?”

I groaned aloud, dashed the offensive weapon from my hand, and staggered.

traordinary presence of mind she gave me a sudden jerk, and I fell prostrate on the ground. Disengaged from my hold, she rushed from the apartment, locking the door after her. For some time I remained unable to move; such was the state to which I was reduced, that in my raving I called frantically on her to return, till exhausted I sank into insensibility. Passion had reduced me to a woman's weakness.

My first sensation was acute pain in my leg, which had been hurt by the fall, and a belief that my head had turned into a ball of fire. By great difficulty I rose, and with a confused consciousness attempted to reach the casement for air, when a kind of jibbering laugh, and a "ha, ha! Mr. Deerhurst," broke on my ears. Looking towards the place from where the sound proceeded, I saw the hideous face of Nelly Dudgeon, as she stood at the casement with her hands a-kimbo, and her purpled visage expressive of fiend-like triumph. In the weakened state of my nerves, it is impossible to express the fearful impression she made on my mind.

In after years the memory of deeper, of sadder scenes have faded away before the influence of time; but the countenance of that fury has never been forgotten. Often has it haunted my pillow till I was obliged to quit my rest and seek for relief in society—nay, even dissipation.

The first glance I cast at Nelly Dudgeon restored my reason, and all the injury I had done the amiable, the gentle Clara, in exposing her to the observations of such a wretch, rose before me. For a moment I hesitated how to act ; then concluding it better to bully in a commanding voice, called out : " What brings you here ? What business have you with me at this hour ? "

" You are not my master," she answered insolently, " though Lady Eastville is your mistress ; but when my noble master returns to-morrow, great a gentleman as you are, Mr. Deerhurst, and ready as you were to complain of poor servants, I take my oath you shall tramp off, even before myself."

I perfectly trembled before her, and quickly resolved to bribe her to silence ; but closing the window, she fled before I could arrange my plans. I spent the night in a state of unspeakable misery, indeed my grief amounted to despair.

All hopes of Clara were for ever lost. My own conduct had placed an impassable gulf between us, and most probably I should never again see her, who to me was as the light of heaven. Then these selfish regrets yielded to apprehensions lest Nelly, by her reports, might expose her to mortification or suspicion, or perhaps the jealousy of Sir Egbert, and then I would exclaim, unhappy Clara, what brought her to my room ? Why, in the

lence of the night, amidst its dubious light, did he steal on my rest, and, like a spirit of darkness, assuming an angel's form, work up my soul to madness!—To rest was impossible. I attempted to lie on the couch, but the attitude increased my oppression, so in spite of the pain of my leg, which was greatly inflamed since my fall, I paced up and down the Terrace walk, gazed into the hall and on the wide staircase, with the terrible conviction that only a few steps separated me from Clara, and still that I was doomed never again to see her. Towards morning, from the excess of exhaustion, I threw myself on the couch, and fell into a feverish slumber.

I was roused by a servant entering with my breakfast. "It is very strange, Mr. Deerhurst," he said; "but some person locked your door outside."

This awakened me to a full consciousness of all that had happened on the preceding night. I made no observation, and the attendant retired. Again I began to revolve the results likely to arise from my frenzy. I hoped Nelly had witnessed the whole scene, then she must acquit Lady Eastle. If so, I cared not how much I was criminated. Of course if Sir Egbert's pride or jealousy were roused, he would challenge me; in that case I would send for Mellish as my second, heroically and his fire, and fire my own pistols off in the

air. I do solemnly declare that, amidst suppositions and plans, one thought of an offer from God never occurred, one prayer for his fitness or support never was uttered, and I leant on the broken reed of my own contrivance to rescue me out of the danger in which involved myself.

I rung the bell, and sent to say I wished to speak to Nelly Dudgeon. The footman came palpably; but I was void of all discretion. Perfectly bewildered from the excess of grief and remorse, while impatiently waiting for her, I saw a carriage drive up to the door; and the bustle attending Sir Egbert's arrival, as his sweet voice of Clara reached me as she welcomed him back.

I attempted to rise and go out on the garden walk, but I shrank back on my seat like a coward afraid of detection. Soon after Doctor Eastville entered my apartment. He was addressing me in his usual cheerful manner, when, fixing his eyes on my wild and haggard visage, he exclaimed, "My dear Sir, how is this? You appear extremely ill, why it is but five days since I last saw you, and though Lady Eastville said she was apprehensive for your health, I had no reason to be alarmed. What can have caused this change?"

He sat beside me, and taking my wrist b

his fingers, shook his head, exclaiming: "Why, Mr. Deerhurst, you are trembling like a man in an ague; and worse again, your leg, which should be now quite well, is frightfully swollen. Pray explain how all this has happened."

Trying to force a smile, I replied: "For some days I have been feverish; and last night, being consumed with thirst, I drank some wine, which, in my weakened state, affected me, for I have never ranked a love of drink among my sins. In short, Doctor, I lost my balance and fell, and have spent a night of intense suffering."

"I can well believe it," he said, kindly; "come, raise your leg while I examine it."

As I was in the act of doing so the door opened, and Sir Egbert, with Herbert in his arms, and holding by the hand a fair, very delicate little girl, entered. How proud, how happy, how like a perfect gentleman he appeared! What an abject wretch I felt, as I shrank before my noble, generous host!

"This, Mr. Deerhurst," he said, "is our little girl, the Doctor's patient; look, is she not very like Lady Eastville?"

The child pressed forward, putting up her little mouth to kiss me.

"There, there!" exclaimed Jerold; "now go away, good girl. Sir Egbert, Mr. Deerhurst has received a fresh hurt on his leg, and I am really very bad temper about it."

Sir Egbert expressed his regret, saying: "*Now* that I recognize in Mr. Deerhurst a relative of Lady Eastville, I must be doubly solicitous about him."

As he spoke these words, he fixed his eyes on me, with a look which seemed to penetrate my inmost thoughts. I felt confused, and essayed to say something in return for his politeness, when Nelly Dudgeon marched from my sleeping-room, saying: "Do you want me, Mr. Deerhurst?"

Cursing her in my soul, I hastily answered: "Not just now, Doctor Jerold will see to my leg."

"No wonder it should be painful," said she, addressing Dr. Jerold, while she cast upon me a look of diabolical triumph, "for Mr. Deerhurst did not sleep in his own bed last night."

"Is it possible, Mr. Deerhurst," exclaimed Sir Egbert, in a tone of unaffected surprise, "that you were unable to reach your room?"

"For heaven's sake," inquired Jerold, in a petulant voice, "why did you not ring for assistance? It was next to madness to remain up in your state of health—I have no patience with you."

Now, though a weak and certainly a very guilty man, nature never formed me for a hardened villain. Unequal to assume any self-command, I remained silent.

"Why do you loiter here?" said Sir Egbert, angrily, to Nelly, "and you, my love," he con-

ing Herbert's head, who was standing on his knees, "go to mamma."

scarcely gone, when the little girl sitting about the room called out: "here is grandpapa's picture;" and Mr. Arnheim's miniature, which I had in Clara's bosom.

: started—turned deadly pale, and, without saying a word, stepped out by the window.

relief in seeing that he turned to the stable that led to the stables. In a minute

he returned. He looked excited; but his countenance was calm, as taking his little daughter, and he said: "Come now, and I will show you Lady Cora. By-the-bye, Mr. Deerpark, do you know me, "have you seen her?"

in the affirmative, and we then spoke of the subject. He was calm, when Mrs. Waller came, and in a few minutes told Doctor Jerold that Lady Eastville requested to see him. He immediately complied with her summons. Nearly an hour and a half after he returned, and he then appeared in the parlour, and his generally cheerful, candid countenance was gloomy and stern. Closing the door, in abrupt accents he said: "Mr. Deerpark, Lady Eastville has confided to me the secret which she offered her last night, and which you are no excuse can palliate; though

lady so perfectly modest and retiring, the wife of Sir Egbert Eastville."

I looked abashed, but made no reply.

After a time he said, with less st
"However, even were it my office to
you, I would not do so, for whatever it
seized you, your appearance, Mr. Deerh
ficiently proves your regret; let me then
my advice. Lady Eastville has resolv
again willingly to enter the company
who, under any circumstances, could p
insult her, or so mistake her character
pute illicit love to the friendship and cor
early companionship. Although her na
gentle and yielding in trifles, when once
siders any act a religious duty, no eart
can influence her, for, to confess a tru
apprehensive that your quitting the T
your present state may increase your
worse again. awaken any suspicion in S

you have no alternative but to prepare to depart with me. I shall now see Sir Egbert, and plead your excuse by saying that your inflamed limb requires daily attendance, and that under the press of business I could not possibly spare it to you, except in my own house."

A groan of anguish burst from me.

"Nay, pluck up courage, young man," he said in friendly accents; "bid adieu to your hospitable host as cheerfully as you can. For worlds I would not that one suspicion crossed his breast. He is a man of the most acute sensibility; and to the coldest, jealousy is a fearful passion."

I then explained how Nelly Dudgeon certainly watched us. He expressed his regret, but said: "We can easily silence her with gin; however, you did right to acquaint me, for to-morrow I shall ride over and elicit all she knows and thinks on the subject."

A servant soon entered to pack up my things and place them in Doctor Jerold's chariot. All the preparations that were to separate me for ever from Clara were rapidly concluded, and I viewed them with an agony which I think must have again disturbed my reason, otherwise I could not have acted so indiscreetly—indeed some fatality seemed to drive me on. I had entered the hall, and having rung for the footman, sent by him some gratuity to the servants, with thanks for

the attention they had paid me. At the instant Herbert came bounding down the stairs, and springing to my arms, began to caress me, and with childish eagerness to press my stay.

It occurred to me that I should warn Clara of Nelly Dudgeon's knowledge of our interviews. I tore a leaf from my tablet, and first apologizing for my mad conduct in exposing her to danger, entreated she would guard against Nelly, and as soon as possible part with her. Just as it was concluded, I heard steps approaching; thrusting it into Herbert's bosom, I pinned it, and told him to take it to mamma, and to let no one else see it. Sir Egbert and Jerold now entered; the former with studied politeness regretted that illness should have hastened my departure, adding, that if I continued in the neighbourhood he should hope for my company when the hunting commenced.

Nelly bustled into the room; I thrust some money into her hand; she appeared grateful. Jerold looked angrily at me, and hurried forward.

"Will you not wait a moment to see Lady Eastville?" said Sir Egbert, addressing me, "I cannot imagine what detains her, for I have twice sent to acquaint her you were setting off. Why, Doctor!" he exclaimed, "I never saw you so impatient before," as Jerold actually dragged me forward.

"I am impatient for a patient," said the Doctor, forcing a laugh.

"Jerold, if you mean this for a pun I cannot compliment your wit," said Sir Egbert, laughing.

By this time I was placed in the carriage; Jerold jumped in after me; Sir Egbert mounted Lady Cora to see us part of the way, and soon, very soon I was hurried from the Terrace and its beloved mistress. When we reached the gate, Sir Egbert bade us adieu.

During the remainder of our drive, Jerold spoke seriously on my madness in having insulted Lady Eastville. However, he in some degree composed me by the assurance that he dreaded no further vexation from it. It was impossible, he thought that any thing such a wretch as Nelly said, could influence Sir Egbert, or affect his lady's character. Alas! with all his knowledge of human nature, how little he anticipated the excess of misery which that vile, vindictive woman brought on her pure, high-minded mistress.

On reaching the small town of F—, Jerold courteously welcomed me to his home, then ushering me into what he termed his state apartment, he bade me good morning, observing that he should be professionally engaged until the dinner hour.

CHAPTER II.

DOCTOR JERROLD'S house was plain; it had every thing necessary to the actual comfort of life; but there were none of those elegant refinements which may be termed feminine, and there was not such a nameless charm around one's home as is to be found in the house of a woman.

My restlessness was so great that not only did I torture myself by exerting my leg by exercising it, but I influenced me to remain quiet. I paced up and down the apartment, then I made my way to the garden, for I would not venture into the street. I had such a horror of seeing any person in this manner passed that memorable day. At six in the afternoon the Doctor returned home. After his hasty dinner, he was much hurried with his business. My self-love was offended at his manner. He shook hands, indeed politely, with me, and then he took up a bottle of his best claret, which he offered me to enjoy, as he smacked his lips and perceived the flavour. He ate his dinner with a keen relish and began to discourse upon some extraordinary case of nerves that had just come under his observation. He was fond of his profession, and at the

all his faculties were engrossed by the probable success of an operation on this nervous patient. At length, noticing my abstraction, he good-humouredly said :

"Here have I been indulging in what Lady Eastville terms mannerism ; however, Mr. Deerhurst, no hurry of business shall prevent my going to the Terrace in the morning, and prevent Nelly doing any further mischief."

I thanked him, but I believe coolly, for I was of such an unreasonable temper, while I felt no concern for anything that was not immediately connected with my own happiness, I expected every person to be interested for me. Either not noticing, or what is just as probable, not caring about my ill-temper, Jerold handed me the key of his book-case, advised me to go to bed early, and prepared an anodyne for me to take at nine ; he then departed, saying his return was uncertain.

Oh ! how cold, how lifeless, how commonplace, all this appeared after the delicious evenings at the Terrace !

For the next three days I did not see Doctor Jerold. His establishment consisted of three or four servants, who proceeded in their business with the regularity of clock-work. My impatience under this dull, and monotonous existence was such that I thought even the excitement of grief would have been preferable.

On the fourth day I heard of his joy that was damped the moment I : his usual placid countenance was fin
ness.

“ You have been at the Terrace,”
“ and matters there are not as well
pected; but, in pity’s sake do not d
am prepared for the worst.”

“ You have, young man, indeed,
foolishly, nay madly. But reproach
less, so sit down till I explain the re
levity. It seems that in whatever s
place between you and Lady Eastville,
must have been broken, for we were
hour when Sir Egbert saw it lying n
dow; this, with the miniature bei
your apartment, appeared strange.
general so haughty to his servants,
of the butler, ‘ Had you drunk mor
usual?’ Without wishing to crimin
man answered: ‘ That her Lady
dered supper in your apartment—the
was in attendance; but it was probal
ill, as Lady Eastville, against her us
after seeing Master Herbert to bed, l
to you.’ ‘ And the hour,’ said
‘ After eleven, I should think, my
the answer.

“ Now, Mr. Deerhurst, as you n

all this at least appeared strange to Sir Egbert, and made him feel uncomfortable; but it did not amount to absolute jealousy. At dinner he appeared as usual; when the dessert and the children came in, Herbert sprang into his arms; in playing with him he found your note in his dress. Even that might have passed unnoticed, but the child insisted that you gave it to him for mamma, and that no other person was to see it. Terrified and miserable from the hour you had insulted her, this last proof of your temerity overpowered Lady Eastville; clasping her hands she sank back upon her chair, without power to explain the truth or defend herself. Trembling from the excess of his fury, Sir Egbert read the ill-fated scroll: and then stamping with rage, summoned Nelly Dudgeon, and in the presence of his household and children, commanded her to tell all she knew of Lady Eastville and Mr. Deerhurst. Oh! think to what a frightful pitch his passion must have been wrought, to offer such an insult to his noble-minded lady, as to ask such an abandoned wretch to bear witness against her. This was Nelly's hour of triumph and revenge. But an hour before Waler, by her lady's command, had dismissed her, refusing to give her a character, and now from the virago burst forth all the vituperation of low-bred vulgarity; and she described Lady Eastville

"As she spoke she waved her hand, and hastily retired from the apartment, Nel out, 'Sir Egbert, don't let her deceive you; prove all I have said.' Wrought up to the point of anger, she had never before experienced. Eastville pushed the door against her, turning to Sir Egbert, she clasped her hands and exclaimed :

" 'Egbert, much as you have insulted me that too in the presence of a set of fools, still being aware that in some degree you are against me, I shall waive all sense of indignation, and fully explain the events which have led to this disgraceful scene. Alas ! that I ever feel it necessary to defend myself to you, who, until this hour, I thought I was esteemed by.' She laid her hand gently on his arm, but he spurned her, exclaiming in a hoarse voice :

" 'Wretched, abandoned woman ! more and more hateful, for your seeming virtues ! do not to approach me, hope not to again deceive me; this hour I renounce you. The whole of your long practised deceptions now rise in an array before me ; blighting and destroying every hope of happiness ; disgracing me and my children. My children !' he exclaimed, aloud. ' Away, away,' he cried, as Her posing he called, bounded towards him and dashed off the child with unmanly violence.

" 'Good heaven !' exclaimed Lady Eastville, while her every nerve quivered with agony, 'have mercy on us ! Oh ! Egbert,' and she knelt at his feet, 'conquer this terrible passion. Listen, oh ! listen to my explanation, my noble-minded husband, my best, my only love. It is Clara kneels, if she has offended, to entreat your pardon ; but in mercy to yourself, to us all, calm this fearful passion.'

" 'No, no, no !' he answered, as he stamped in his fury, 'from the beginning you loved this man, this Deerhurst. His very name was suppressed. He, the companion of your childhood, your only acknowledged relative, was never mentioned before me, for the least clue had served to betray your secret love. That clue is now found, and the whole light bursts on my astonished soul. Well might he give way to his feelings when Herbert first appeared before him. Even then the likeness struck me. Away, thou offspring of guilt !' he exclaimed to the terrified child who stood before him ; 'your very sight blasts me. Ha, still here !' and he raised his arm to strike him, under a state of terror to which no language can do justice.

Lady Eastville caught Herbert in her arms ; as she hurried with him from the apartment she heard Sir Egbert call out : 'And your evening banquet and nocturnal visits ! can these too be explained ? Hypocritical, abandoned woman !

the curse you have brought on me shall fall back tenfold into your own bosom.'

Having consigned Herbert to the care of Waller, she returned towards the dining-room, still hoping to appease Sir Egbert; but just as she reached the hall she saw him gallop off. This nearly deprived her of all hope; she sunk back in a fainting fit; the servants who, much terrified at the scene, had been watching their master, collected round her. Mrs. Waller immediately sent off an express for me, which I fortunately met on the way. Nelly, whose grosser nature could never comprehend the excess of misery which she had created, was forcibly turned out of the house by the other domestics. In short, on my arrival, the Terrace, so lately a scene of love and harmony, was in a tumult, all the servants were quarrelling among themselves, while their high-minded mistress, deserted and degraded, lay on the bed of sickness.

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and not thus agitate herself, but to sit and arrange what was best to be done to Egbert. She then told me that her uneasiness proceeded from an apprehension you and Sir Egbert would fight a duel, no reasoning could ever reconcile her to act; and she desired me to see you, and assure you of forgiveness for the misery wrought, if you promised to decline Sir Egbert's challenge."

I was going to speak, but he interrupted me abruptly, saying,

"Patience, Mr. Deerhurst, till you have made your plans. Your honour, or rather the respectability of the society, I know, must be respected. In this instance, learn that, by my advice, Lady Deverville has written a letter fully explaining the circumstances that has occurred on the Terrace relative to her insulting her, and in which I insist on your consideration for you, who are in the wrong as aggressor, should tempt her to soften and atone for her guilt."

I looked haughtily at him. He laid his hand on my arm, and said sternly,

"Nay, Mr. Deerhurst, I offer no apology for what I say,—mine is the language of truth. Should I wish to see the innocent suffer for the guilty? And at present it is Sir Egbert's position to separate for ever from his lady."

"Father of heaven !" I exclaimed, as I started up, while drops of agony rolled down my face, "it is not possible he could desert Clara. I am ready to make a full acknowledgment, to pronounce myself a villain, to submit to any mortification, to any punishment, so she escapes from ill."

"Sit down, or you will destroy your unfortunate leg," said Jerold, in kinder accents; "besides, it is necessary for you to know the plan we have decided upon. Lady Eastville's letter will be presented to Sir Egbert by the Rev. Mr. Coaltsley; he is Rector of Saint Mary's, and an old and sincere friend of Sir Egbert's. He highly esteems Lady Eastville, and contemns the very idea of her being guilty; for, to the disgrace of this neighbourhood, be it known that when Nelly Dudgeon bruited about the quarrel, her respectable authority was credited, and Lady Eastville, in spite of her religion and virtue, pronounced guilty. Positively the scandal of these people will make a misanthrope of me. Mr. Coaltsley will support the letter with his advice and firm belief in Lady Eastville's innocence. Of course, Sir Egbert satisfied on that head, will seek to punish you for daring to insult him."

"Of course, of course," I uttered impatiently.

"I do not think so ill of you," said the Doctor gravely, "as to suppose, even if you had the

power, that you would increase the misery you have wrought. But the fact is, your leg, which a few days hence promised to be a fellow for the other, is swollen to a degree, and shows symptoms of a very alarming nature."

"Good heaven!" I exclaimed, starting up in terror. "you cannot imagine there is any fear of my losing it."

"There is, if you jump up every moment you are excited. Independent of a professional feeling, which naturally makes me wish my patients to recover, I am sorry for you, as I impute the act of which you have been guilty to the uncurbed passion of youth, influenced by wine and fever. In cold blood, I am certain you could not act the villain."

Now in thus exposing my most secret thoughts, I must acknowledge that, from the time Jerold insinuated the possibility of my losing my leg, it in a great degree sobered and absorbed all my feelings; so I listened patiently while he proceeded to say,

"Mr. Deerhurst, though it is not hospitable to turn you out, I have presumed so far as to have engaged a place for you to-morrow in the coach which passes from York through the small hamlet of Eastville on its way to London. The moment you arrive there, send this letter," handing me one, "to Abernethy; he is my most intimate

friend, and will on that account pay you every attention. And you must be solely guided by his advice; for though I would not willingly afflict you, I feel it my duty to say, a few more days of such feverish excitement and stamping about, would most likely terminate in gangrene, leaving you no chance but death or the loss of your limb."

Shuddering, I expressed my horror.

"Are we not strange, inconsistent beings?" he said. "But a few moments ago, and you looked daggers at me because I did not wish you to meet Sir Egbert and stand his fire, when most probably another limb would be mutilated. Now it is to prevent this challenge I send you off. Abernethy will enclose me a certificate to prove your illness. This is intended for your Colonel. Mr. Coaltsley will show it to Sir Egbert, who for the time must postpone his revenge; and I expect that ere you are well enough to accept of his challenge, he will be convinced of his lady's innocence, be again restored to the ties of domestic love, and have too much good sense to risk his life, or disturb his family for the sake of punishing one whom he views as a reckless libertine. When not under the influence of passion, Sir Egbert is a man of an exalted and philosophic mind, and will not act against his judgment to please the multitude. I should suppose that the Eastvilles will remove from this

as having devoted her whole time to you at the Terrace, to the exclusion of every other person, she said. She was also sure you were no relative at all, but that the story was invented to give colour to your intimacy. This coarse falsehood should have proved her infamy to Sir Egbert—but when did passion pause to reflect? Amidst her other bold assertions she said she had learned from your servant, Llewellyn, who it seems had come twice a week for your orders, and with messages from your corps, that you had been quartered three years before at Chatham; and Nelly then, with the most unblushing effrontery said, it was easy to account for Master Herbert's extreme likeness to you, as she knew her Lady spent all her evenings with Mrs. Janet Onslow; and that, as you were all Welsh people, no doubt you were always together, and that her old mistress, Lady Aylsbury, often said: "Nelly, I wonder how Lady Eastville can devote so much of her time to these mercantile people? Mark me, Egbert will be much displeased when he hears of it."

I interrupted Jerold to declare I had not only never seen Lady Eastville in Chatham, but at the period was ignorant of her being in its neighbourhood, and that my Colonel knew I had been on leave of absence most of the time that the regiment was quartered there.

"Any defence of Lady Eastville's character to me is quite superfluous," answered the Doctor

etulantly. "The unfortunate lady is incapable of error; her sufferings proceed from the sins of hers," he turned indignantly from me.

"Let me, in mercy, entreat of you to proceed," cried.

"Then do not interrupt me, Mr. Deerhurst. I am much pressed for time, and this business at the Terrace afflicts me more than you can imagine. Not to return to Lady Eastville, the gross insinuations of Nelly, and her bold assertions which I knew to be false, that Lady Aylsbury had approved of her intimacy with Mrs. Onslow, rescued her from her depression, occasioned by a consciousness of having, however innocently, admitted of too great an intimacy with you. Turning to Sir Egbert, with the calm dignity natural to her, and a degree of spirit she seldom practised, she said :

"Sir Egbert; it grieves and surprises me that, under any circumstances, you can so far descend from your high position and general integrity as to listen to the coarse suggestions of that vile man, instigated from low revenge at knowing his own character cannot bear investigation. Let me then entreat of you to resume your place as head of your household; dismiss these people, so you will recollect what has now occurred is but the result of mistaken passion. And bear in mind, as she turning to her domestics, that whoever speaks to this subject quits my service."

prove an I have said. Wrought up w
of anger, she had never before experienc
Eastville pushed the door against her, tl
ing to Sir Egbert, she clasped her ha
exclaimed :

“ ‘ Egbert, much as you have insulted
that too in the presence of a set of low
still being aware that in some degree ap
are against me, I shall waive all sense of
cation, and fully explain the events w
led to this disgraceful scene. Alas ! that
ever feel it necessary to defend my o
you, who, until this hour, I thought i
esteemed me.’ She laid her hand gent
arm, but he spurned her, exclaiming in
voice :

“ ‘ Wretched, abandoned woman ! more
more hateful, for your seeming virtues !
to approach me, hope not to again deceive
this hour I renounce you. The whole :

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that the Eastvilles will remove from this

neighbourhood to the continent until the memory of this adventure passes away ; and in despite of Lady Eastville's sad presentiment, I hope she may enjoy many years of happiness. Now, Mr. Deerhurst, I will leave you. Retire soon to your rest, for you must be at the hamlet early, as the York mail only stops there to change horses. You will of course breakfast here, as the seldomer you move from the coach, the better." With these words he bade me good night, and retired.

Earlier on the following morning than was necessary, I was awakened by his entering my apartment. He kindly attended to my leg, but I felt mortified at his anxiety to get me out of his house. Though in general so calm in his temper, and regular in his habits, he threw his whole household into a fuss to hurry the breakfast ; and ere I could swallow a cup of coffee, his chariot, which was to convey me to the hamlet, was announced. He immediately assisted me into it, filled the pockets with interesting volumes, which he requested I would take on to London, hoping they might amuse me ; then, pitying my extreme dejection, in friendly accents he desired me to cheer up, as he expected ere many days to have it in his power to acquaint me that harmony was restored at the Terrace.

CHAPTER III.

anted some minutes of ten when I drove to Doctor Jerold's. He accompanied me on my way for about a quarter of a league, and then bade me adieu, being obliged to visit some one in a different direction. Much exhausted, I turned back, and fell into an uneasy slumber, from which I was roused by the carriage stopping. The driver opened the door, helped me to descend, and pointing to a narrow pathway, said it would lead to a seat, within a few yards of which the carriage must stop, and that a horn was always to be blown to acquaint the Eastvilles, lest any person on the Terrace might wish to go. He offered to accompany me to show me the way, but I declined, and drove off.

I was then within the precincts of Sir Egmont's—within a few paces of the house which contained Clara, my worshipped Clara! Only he who have loved as I did can imagine the throbbing of my bosom. At the thought

I drew forth a watch Jerold had lent me not yet eleven, and the coach would not hamlet for half an hour. An ardent more to see the Terrace, that hallowed my exquisite happiness and mad folly, I passed rapidly through a turn-gate, le walk which ran along the top of an old either side of which were hedges of e intermixed with wild briars and roses. T led to a pleasure ground, which divide the lawn, and was protected from the c sunk fence. Though quite lame, and much pain, I actually ran on to get a v house, to obtain which I had to enter c path, and which was terminated by a ru thrown over a trout stream. Crossing myself on a wide avenue, which branc two directions; the one to the right house, the other to the kitchen garde which was the village, and a stile was the workmen to pass from it into the So my wanderings had led me still ne spot where the coach stopped, and this nate, for I felt ill and fatigued; howeve down, though slowly, to gaze on the how cast on it what I imagined would be a I turned back, and seeing the ruins pavilion, which lay near the garden solved to enter, and remain there till I

This ruin had been converted into a gar-
age, and was crowded with implements for
growing, seeds, and some rustic benches ; on one
of these I threw myself, and again I looked at my
watch, for I felt impatient to be gone, but it still
showed a quarter of an hour of the time. I sprang
up, or I heard the barking of dogs ; an Italian
hound and a little terrier rushed in, and were
followed by Herbert, his tiny voice calling
their names. In a transport I caught the
child in my arms ; he returned my caress,
and seeing the dogs run out, impatiently called to
them. As I laid him down, Lady East-
cliff entered. On seeing me, she started, uttered
a cry, and overcome by terror at my sudden
appearance, grasped at the door for support.
To me, this unexpected, unhopèd-for meet-
ing threw me into a state of the wildest confu-
sion, depriving me of all reflection. Blessing the
circumstance which afforded me an opportunity of apolo-
gising for the injury I had wrought, I darted for-
ward, dashing myself at her feet, grasped her
hands, alternately pressing them to my throbbing
forehead and temples. Astonished at my presump-
tuous temerity, some time elapsed ere her trem-
bling tongue could find utterance. Then, dashing
from her, she exclaimed, while her whole frame
quivered with indignation :
" Miserable, lost man ! how dare you, in the

on to destruction. "Is common anger
with the misery you have already wrought
Almighty God! why allow the wicked
triumph?"

I was really shocked and grieved
awake, or did my reason wander?
indeed be the gentle, the religious Clara
who stood before me, flushed with
moment, and other thoughts arose, as
in thinking that her passions could be
Anger was sin, and sin brought her ruin.
Hitherto she had always appeared so
pure, so pious, it seemed a perfect
attempt her seduction. I attempted
her with words of tenderness; she was
the ruin. I darted after her, calling out

"Clara, I only crave forgiveness for
grant it, and I will swear never again
myself into your presence."

She would have fled from my in

earth; send me not away, then, with the increased sorrow of your displeasure. Alas! it needeth not, for my uncontrollable love for you drives me almost to the verge of madness; in pity, then, pronounce my pardon for a crime originating in yourself."

Turning on me a look of withering scorn, she repeated:

"Uncontrollable love!" adding, "Freville, hope not to excuse yourself to me by such weak apologies, thus making a mockery of my reason. Think you passion is an excuse for insult; degrading indeed must be its influence when it led you to trample on all the laws of hospitality, when it led you to return Sir Egbert's generous kindness in risking his life to save yours, by attempting to seduce me, his wife, his beloved! Oh! how base, how essentially selfish must be the sentiment that would sacrifice the peace, the hour of domestic love, to its own gratification. Oh! Freville," she continued, in softer tones, "how was I deceived in my opinion of you under any emergency. Next to Sir Egbert, I would have confided in you as my dearest, most natural protector. I relied upon your honour as on that of an affectionate brother. In the unsuspecting simplicity of my heart, I sought your converse, and thought to win your thoughts to heaven; and how have you rewarded me? By the confession of the crimi-

and, greater woe than all : grieved to the
honoured, beloved husband. Nor is there
have roused within me evil thought and
of whose very existence, but for you,
remained in ignorance."

I attempted to grasp her hand, but
out :

" Miserable man ! let not your inordinance
deceive you. The evil I have to contend
hatred, not love. Yes, Freville, from
you so basely insulted me, followed as
so much disgrace and sorrow, my temper
rally mild and equable, has changed, not
from my own sufferings, as grief at a
noble-minded Sir Egbert led by your
actions to forget his dignity. Yes, I do not
could hate you, in despite of my Saviour
commands to love those that persecute me.
as if vice was infectious, and that you
inspired me with sin. Almighty God !"

cess of her emotion. There was a wildness in her looks—I trembled for her reason. I raised her gently in my arms, and she made no effort to resist. The most violent struggle to escape had not terrified me like her apathy. My parched tongue clove to the roof of my mouth as I attempted to utter some words. At the instant, I heard the sound of a horn and the cracking of a whip, announcing the rapid approach of the mail. Could I leave the unhappy Clara? I hesitated. Desperate wretch as I was, I would have staked my immortal soul to have restored her to the quiet of which I had so recklessly robbed her. She saw my hesitation. She uttered a low but very wild cry. Again she was on her knees, her arms grasped mine, her eyes overflowing with tears were turned upon me.

“Freville,” she said, “have some pity upon your victim; do not drive me to the awful crime of cursing you. Should my letter be of any avail, Sir Egbert even now is on his road to the Terrace. I may yet be happy. Think of my poor children, and fly this place for ever!” Again the horn sounded. “Away, away!” she cried, “another moment and it will be too late. See, we are already observed.”

I looked in the direction she pointed, and saw two of the gardener’s men intently watching us; but unfortunately for Lady Eastville, too distant

to hear our conversation. Grieved beyond measure at this discovery, I attempted to disentangle myself from her grasp, for she still clung to my knees.

"One moment, Freville," she said, looking wistfully towards me, "I have a presentiment that this is the last interview we shall ever have in this world. It was very wicked and unchristian-like to think of cursing you; receive, then, my blessing, and with it my sincere forgiveness. It is God who grants me power to act thus by you. Oh, how infinite are his mercies!"

On saying these words, she arose, and rushing past me, in a moment was out of sight. I remained as if fastened to the earth, until roused by Doctor Jerold's servant, who laying his hand on my shoulder, told me the coach waited at the stile. I sent him forward, and then, with my usual unreflecting folly, beckoned to the two gardener's men to advance, and indiscreetly begged of them not to mention a word of the interview they had just witnessed between me and Lady Eastville; and to bribe their silence, I drew forth from my pocket some notes, and handed them five pounds each. I afterwards discovered they were a part of the money given to me by poor Clara, the night previous to my quitting the Terrace; indeed, everything seemed to combine against that unfortunate lady; and for many years

afterwards, such was my presumption, so great the Cimmerian darkness into which my soul had sunk, that I imputed all the evil that resulted from my irregulated passions and want of religious principles, to the fates or destinies; thus, like my father, making a 'scape-goat of the Providence I had offended.

I arrived in London without any other adventure; but my leg suffered greatly from the violent exercise and the uneasy attitude I was obliged to retain all day, as the coach was full, consequently I could not raise it. On reaching London, I removed to a small lodging in Piccadilly. Next morning I sent for Abernethy; his hasty, rough manner taught me to regret Jerold's kindness; but by my ill conduct I had separated myself from every sincere friend, and was now solely thrown upon the mercy of strangers. With stern decision, Abernethy told me that if I did not rigidly observe his directions, he would not attend. First, because he would not stake his character with an unmanageable patient; next, that he could not waste his time from those who might value it. From this matter-of-fact business I knew there was no alternative, and having a horror of losing my limb, I submitted with the best grace I could to his prescriptions.

Nothing could be more sad than my position that period; stretched day after day upon a

hard couch, originally, I believe, stuffed with hay, with pillows, not of down, but of chicken quills, on which to rest my aching head, with no attendance, but what a sulky maid-of-all-work could spare from the household business, I had full leisure to reflect over my folly. Yet, selfish as I was, my greatest anxiety was to know whether Sir Egbert had returned to the Terrace, and whether he had become reconciled to his lady. Our last interview had awakened in my mind, a strange conflict of contending thoughts. Never before had I witnessed Clara yield to the influence of any violent emotion; nay, even at the time I had so presumptuously confessed my love, I had scarcely indulged a shadow of hope. But during the excitement of our last interview, she had betrayed the burning passions which glowed beneath her calm exterior, proving that her placid manner originated in strong religious principles, not in constitutional coldness. True, she had vehemently declared that it was ~~hatred~~, not love, she experienced towards me; but my vanity and hopes suggested that she was self-deceived in her sentiments, and that her fancied hatred sprung from the struggles of a passion she felt to be criminal. Truly, if at that period vanity was my besetting sin, it was also my consolation. There was I, day after day, stretched on my hard bed, in a miserable lodging,

apprehensions being entertained by Abernethy that I should lose my leg ; not a friend near, no means to spare on comforts, not to say luxuries ; I soothed and supported my mind with the fancy that the lovely, the noble, the beautiful Lady Eastville, was devotedly attached to me, although, from the strength of her virtue, she would not admit the fact even to her own

For two or three days after my arrival in London, I had to write to Doctor Jerold, inclosing Abernethy's certificate of my illness, and entreating him to send me a full account how matters proceeded at the Terrace. By return of post, I received a long answer, written in a scrawl, scarcely legible ; it was evident the Doctor wrote under great agitation.

Mr. Deerhurst,

As to the particulars of your last interview with Lady Eastville, I am in ignorance, or by what means you managed to seduce her into it ; the consequences have proved most unhappy ; I apprehend, it has instilled some suspicions into the mind of Sir Egbert, for, as his little girl is seriously ill, I am not in a hurry ; on the contrary, have received an assurance that my future visits at the Terrace are dispensed with. Mr. Deerhurst, I con-

the least, in a most ungentlemanly way, and therefore decline all future acquaintance and correspondence with you. Any letters addressed to me shall be returned unanswered and flung unread into the fire.

“ ROBERT J

The resentment, which at any other time I must have experienced at this letter, and regret at the idea that Sir Egbert had overruled my last interview with Clara, have increased his jealousy. I was annoyed too at Jerold's being dismissed from Terrace. I knew that, independent of professional skill, Clara considered him a friend, and had given a proof of her confidence in his judgment, by acquainting him with the whole of the case; then, the idea of not being able to do so, created a suspense so

excruciating bodily pain would again drive me to seek for rest. Moved by my evident sorrow, Abernethy took a kind interest in my fate, and his usually stern manner was softened.

I now wrote to Charles Mellish, who had joined the detachment of his regiment in York, entreating him, as he would save my reason—my life, to obtain all the information he could relative to the Eastville family, and to immediately acquaint me with every particular. I also expressed a wish to know, to what reports my adventure at the Terrace had given rise to in my corps, and in the neighbourhood. After despatching this letter, I became more composed ; but my appetite was gone, and my rest broken : I was subdued to a state of the most pitiable weakness. Uncheered by society, no longer indulging in my criminal hope of seducing Lady Eastville ; with no prospect before me but to join the service companies at Demerara, reduced in circumstances and strength, I scarcely thought it possible that I could ever sink into a lower state of misery. Alas ! at that period, comparatively speaking, I knew sorrow only by its name. A week passed, and I might have received Mellish's answer, but it came not ; another, and still no letter : my suspense amounted to torture. I would wring my hands with agony, and groan like one possessed. Another week was nearly expired, and all hope

of hearing anything relative to the Eastvilles had faded away, leaving my heart utterly desolate, when, one morning, the unusual sound—at that door—of a postman's rap, broke on my ear. To witness my emotion of delight, one might suppose that health, love, and happiness were to be contained in Mellish's answer. Again the quick, impatient rap sounded through the house: I shook my hand-bell, I tried to rise to rush to the hall door, but fell back from weakness and exhaustion. I heard, for a moment, the postman and maid disputing, then the door clapped to with violence, and no one came near me. My impatience amounted to frenzy: I shook the bell, and stamped—I shrieked. At length, the maid servant entered.

"My letter!" I exclaimed; "it was—it must be for me!"

"Is that all that ails you?" she gently answered. "I believe you are crazy to make such a row in the house. I thought you, at least, had broken your leg again. 'Tis well for you my mistress is out."

"But the letter!" I exclaimed, as well as my quivering lips could utter, "what of that?"

"The letter is for you; but when my mistress went out, where could I get change to pay for it? And the postman would not wait till I came up to you: he said, forsooth, he had

been delayed too long already ; but he passes by his way at five o'clock in the evening, and he desired me to have the postage in my hand, so you need not be in such a fuss, 'tis eleven now, and at five you shall have the letter."

These six hours appeared to me as ages. Never did I feel my own circumstances so depressing : I had no servant to send after the postman—no strength to pursue him. I staggered to the window, and, though I knew my watching would not hasten five o'clock, and though the position of standing was agony, there I remained, with my watch in my hand, counting every tedious minute.

The wished-for hour came ; I saw the postman approach ; how I got down stairs, I know not, but I reached the hall door, opened it, thrust the money into his hand, and snatching the letter, with incredible swiftness flew back to my apartment, and read the following strange epistle from Charles Mellish :

" York, Tuesday 21st.

" Dear Freville,

" In compliance with the request you have so energetically expressed, I should have written to you ere this, but only returned within the last few days from Worcester, and have since been much amused by the different accounts of your

adventure at the Terrace. You request of me to make every inquiry relative to Sir Egbert Eastville and his family. I assure you I have been most active on the subject, though with little success. You are aware that Sir Egbert, though so munificent in his hospitality to the neighbourhood, disliked forming military acquaintances, and never called on our corps till your good fortune, or bad horsemanship, introduced you into the very bosom of his family, when he condescended to leave his card at our mess. I have prowled about the neighbourhood, assiduously endeavouring to engage myself in conversation with any he or she whose appearance promised a love of scandal for its own sake, or who looked as though money might melt their taciturnity. Hopeless expedition ! Further, from your brother officers I could gain no particulars. However to gratify you, on Sunday last I rode to the little town of F——, where your friend Doctor Jerold resides ; and, as Eastville is in its parish, and the family attend its church, I thought it probable I might there glean some information ; nor have I been disappointed. By the bye, before I enter into a description of a scene I witnessed, I must amuse you with an account of some of the contradictory reports circulated of your scene with Lady Eastville. Deerhurst, it really was an act of charity to give the old maids and bachelors of

y of York something to talk of; and
narity covers a multitude of sins.

urs, to your confusion, that your last
h the lady took place in an old
ruin, near a kitchen garden. In the
dance, and without romance, what is

could you choose such a spot? I
of bowers of roses, banks of violets,
groves, as trysting places for such
s; but cabbages, and turnips, and
ugh! faugh! it was the very anni-
ment. No wonder that Cupid,
tidious of gods, should be revenged;
us, for it seems two of the cultivators
gar necessities witnessed the scene,
grateful for the notes you so liberally
n, swear lustily that you are really
most virtuous young man, for they
y saw their wicked mistress kneel at
atching at the skirts of your coat,
shook her off just as they would a
esumed to crawl up their legs. In
hamlet, among all Sir Egbert's de-
ou are set up for an example of righte-
reville, they don't know you quite so
!

contradiction to this, Doctor Jerold
the gauntlet for Lady Eastville, and,
mits that appearances are against her,

declares her to be the purest, the fairest of created beings, and that you are neither more nor less than an abandoned villain. In short, the Doctor talks confounded nonsense; but some of the old dames have put on their wisest looks, speak their minds, and gently insinuate that it is not for nothing the Doctor is so willing to exonerate Lady Eastville. This skilful practitioner has hitherto borne the most unexceptionable character; but it is now remembered that gleams of avarice, from time to time, have been seen to shoot forth from him, and what more likely than that a bribe has secured his advocacy?

“You may conclude that your adventure is the only subject spoken of at the mess; and, while your moral rejection of Lady Eastville’s advances has won golden opinions from the unsophisticated inhabitants of the hamlet, it has awakened the ire and jealousy of your noble companions in arms. Old Colonel Chilli, who commands here at present, turns up his proboscis of a nose, and shouts out with his cracked, husky voice:

“It is all old-fashioned stuff!” And he further uttered more nonsense and absurdity than I choose to commit to paper; being as it is, *such* nonsense and absurdity in relation to this affair as I am certain your patience would not readily constrain you to read. Lieutenant Dolly, who, you know, is a great singer of canticles, takes another view of the sub-

nd then, ye gods ! how he does abuse the

On the contrary, old Chilli supports a more tasty and accomplished people e English ; and as accomplishments are vogue than morals, and as fashion is the g genius of the age, he upholds them as worthy of our imitation ; and the whole e kept in roars of laughter by the violent int manner in which these ancient sons of rry on their disputes. However, enough for the present. I must return to Lady e."

e copied thus much of Mellish's letter, and ended to lay the whole of it before the out several considerations now prevail with

I desist. I shall give enough to show e writer, although never so selfish and e as myself, was at one time as reckless hinking. I shall tell enough in the sequel eroic generosity and disinterestedness of —more than enough, I sincerely trust, to k for him that good opinion which, I elp thinking, the extracts I have already d those that will presently follow, must m for the present to forfeit.

essages in Mellish's letter which I have ed, contained what I may term a dramatic f observations, thoughtless remarks, and

heartless strictures, the recollection of which fills me with horror. I must add, in justice to myself, that I did not read them at the time without emotions of strong disgust. It was asked, wherefore—knowing full well, as we have known, that when once the reputation of a woman, from whatever cause, becomes the object of suspicion, these consequences speedily ensue, and form no small part of her punishment and persecution; knowing this, I say, it may be asked why I not only did not cease the pursuit of this criminal object, but hasten to make such atonement as it was yet in my power to make. I reply. Mellish proceeded thus :

“ It appears that after you set off from London in the York coach, its fair mistress was seen and pensively walking back to the house, and no doubt, dwelling upon your cruel rejection of her when she should appear before her father, Egbert. In consequence of a most passionate letter she had written to him, and in which her woman’s wit found an excuse for every intemperance; and at the entreaties of Dr. Conable, Rector of his parish, and his esteemed friend, he had been prevailed upon to return to her. But it would appear the demon of jealousy had not been allayed, not exorcised, and was ready to blaze forth on the least provocation. I then what must have been his astonishment

beholding his lady with her white robe all stained from kneeling at the feet of you, her virtuous, but most cruel lover. With her hair dishevelled, and her looks expressive of dismay, there she stood, 'all tattered and torn, like the maid all forlorn,' without making one effort to speak to him, or welcome him back. All this led to renewed inquiries. The workmen, acquiring consequence from being brought forward to bear witness against their mistress, in their own strong language described the scene, and to prove their veracity and your generosity, produced the notes you had given them. This in itself was a sufficient proof that such bribery must be to disguise guilt. Now, Freville, of all the wonders, mine is the greatest to know how you came to be so flush of cash. In vain poor Lady Eastville attempted to speak; in vain the knees so lately bent to you knelt before her obdurate husband, as she wildly asserted her innocence; the proofs of guilt were too strong. He spurned her from him with the fury of a savage, vowing never again to see her; commanding that under no excuse she should presume to address him; then mounting his beautiful Lady Cora, fled, as I understand, to some secluded lodge he has in the mountains.

"Hapless Lady Eastville! all this came from your not being a heroine; then you might have

knelt in the cabbage garden, nay, in the potatoe ridges, and your garment have remained white as unsunned snow, and the elements of air and water have passed over your hair, and it still would have fallen about your face in the most becoming fashion; and you would have danced forward, harp in hand, to salute Sir Egbert. But how different had been your fate! for then your conjugal re-union would have been a scene of harmony. Well, positively there is no resisting bad habits. I commenced this letter with the full intention of describing a scene I had witnessed in the Church of Saint Mary's, and I have not as yet arrived at it.

"I left York very early; it was a splendid morning, like an April one, now sunshine, now showers. I breakfasted at the inn, and while discussing my meal, demanded of the waiter what news he had of the Terrace. He said every person considered Lady Eastville guilty; that her little girl was then dangerously ill, and that a physician from York was attending her, Doctor Jerold being forbidden by Sir Egbert to go near the Terrace; also that Sir Egbert had taken his eldest son with him; but from a belief that the youngest Herbert was not his, refused to see him. Moreover, it was reported that he had already commenced measures for a divorce! Why, Freville, this going

Doctors' Commons will give *éclat* not only self, but to our whole corps.

Having breakfasted, I went to saunter about, a shower coming on, I entered the church, it was some time ere the service was to commence. I was scarcely seated, when I saw a fine commanding carriage, very plainly and veiled, walk, or rather, quickly glide down the aisle, and enter the Eastville pew. She followed by an attendant, leading a child. My doubts of this being Lady Eastville dispelled, they must have been satisfied by the appearance of the female part of the congregation, the winking and grinning of the men.

When after the service began, and the first lesson nearly over, when who should walk in, tall and erect, his stern brow and haughty bearing, Sir Egbert; with him were a tall, stiff, good-looking old lady, his aunt, as I have since learned, and his eldest son, a fair, lovely boy. My eye was immediately turned on them; people stood up to stare as he entered his pew, expecting to have it preoccupied by his lady; fortunately for our curiosity its closely-drawn curtains prevented the possibility of observation as it passed within. But from that, far from devotion; the prayers, indeed, proceeded, with decorum, and the grave looks of the Rev. Mr. Maltby in some degree checked the whis-

pering and grimaces of his flock ; but had Saint Paul preached, and Saint Peter prayed before the congregation, they would not have commanded their attention from the Eastvilles.

“When the service concluded, several persons quitted the church, others remained within. Among the former, all too much agitated to communicate, were the whole of the Eastville party ; though it appears, poor Lady Eastville, who like all sinners is now turning Magdalen, had only left her sick couch for the purpose, little expecting to meet her grim Lord, whose appearance at St. Mary’s was owing to his chariot breaking down as he was proceeding to York.

“Freville, it would require the pencil of a Hogarth to describe the scene that now ensued in the vestibule of the church, where the congregation were detained by a violent thunder-storm accompanied by the heaviest rain I ever remember. Lady Eastville leant back in the shade of a pillar, her veil closely drawn, she seemed scarcely to breathe ; not a person deigned to salute her. You would suppose she bore a plague-spot about her person, from the manner in which her own sex shrank from her. The bold looks of gallantry with which we military would have honoured her were checked by the dignified carriage of Sir Egbert, who, while he stood there impatiently waiting for his chariot, looked as stiff and unbending

brill sergeant, and as ferocious as an
in truth, there was a look of wildness
in his countenance, that in spite of my
commiserated him, and felt my spirit rise
in indignation against the woman who had
such misery and disgrace upon him ; for
condemning a fine dashing young officer,

Freville, or myself, in an affair of gal-
at is all fudge.

thunder passed off, and the carriages
s, but the rain continued as violent as
r Egbert's chariot was announced. The
d aunt whispered something to him, and
out waiting for an answer, stepped has-
rd, and I must say, with much kindness
er drew Lady Eastville's arm under hers
er forward, when Sir Egbert, setting his
e a tiger, and stamping with his right
ed her back. What he said I could not
n the violent sobbing of the elder boy,
been gazing at his mother the whole
weeping bitterly, not daring to approach
Lady Eastville tottered back to her
ainst which she flung her arm for sup-
sunk on the ground, not one of the
sent, offering her any assistance. Sir
men made his exit, actually dragging out
d aunt. They had only just driven off,
Rev. Dr. Coaltsley, accompanied by

Doctor Jerold, and followed by the remainder of his flock, came out from the interior church.

“ Upon seeing Lady Eastville’s position the whole truth rushed upon Jerold’s mind. At that moment he was at her side, raising her arms, and removing her thick veil, gave to her countenance of such death-like paleness, that the most straight-laced of her sex gave a shudder of horror. I know not what might be their feelings; but certainly a change came over mine. In the happy versatility of temper, I condemned her as a hard-hearted, jealous tyrant, who had unjustly persecuted his tender and faithful spouse. Mr. Coatsley hastened to the room for some wine, and by his and the lady’s attentions, Lady Eastville soon revived from her insensibility. She had borne up against the cruel and sneering whispers of the assembly; but kindness seemed to affect her, and pressing the hands of both the gentlemen, she wept long and bitterly. .

“ An old dowager, a Lady Delmore, who seemed much affected, now approached and requested of Lady Eastville to accept of her marriage to return home. And oh! for the sake of poor, contemptible, human nature, had she done so, than the whole tide of feeling turned in Lady Eastville’s favour; and she

moment before had sunk unpitied on the ground, might now have commanded all their attention ; not that they thought her less guilty—but a person of high rank had noticed her. Ere entering Lady Delmore's carriage, she turned back and addressed Mr. Coaltsley ; in doing so she appeared much agitated, and a bright blush overspread her face, rendering it exquisitely beautiful.

“ ‘I have to thank you, Doctor Coaltsley,’ she said in quivering accents, ‘for the protection you have just now afforded me from the contempt and neglect with which I have been most unjustly treated. Your conduct has been that of a Christian ; that of a minister of Him who came to call sinners to repentance ; and more or less, we all sin. I feel a strong conviction that I shall never again enter this church. Could I have foreseen this day, to how many malignant and irregular passions my appearance would give rise, much as I wished to hear the word of God in prayer, I had not come here ; it becometh not a Christian woman to tempt others to sin. Of the foul deed of which I am accused, I am as innocent as my babe, even in thought ; nor do I on that subject deserve any merit, as there was for me no temptation. I am fully aware that in some degree have acted thoughtlessly, nay giddily, and from natural timidity of character, I have yielded too much to others ; had I in the beginning exerted a

le more spirit, matters had not gone so far. at all regrets for the past are superfluous. Appearances, alas ! are strongly against me, yet as . have ever been taught to esteem highly public opinion, as I consider it a duty I owe to my husband, to my children, and above all, to the memory of my beloved father, to remove this foul stigma from my name ; and as, with a very few exceptions, this congregation have thought fit, even here in the house dedicated to God, to pour publicly upon me the full vial of their scorn, I shall now, with your permission, approach yonder altar, and then, in the performance of the most sacred rite of my religion, solemnly attest my innocence.'

" ' Dear Lady Eastville,' said Mr. Coalteley, and he spoke in a soothing voice, ' I have never thought you guilty. I am fully aware how hard you have for years struggled to fight the good fight, to take up the cross, and casting behind lesser things, you have indeed chosen the better part. And if worldly affections have sometimes proved too strong for your human nature, yet have never removed your hopes from that heavenly promise, that ark of rest and bliss which lies beyond the grave. Dear Lady Eastville, in the moment you are much agitated, and—for strong truth—your excitement proceeds from things solely connected with this world. '

been harshly treated ; your indignation has been roused by the stern severity of Sir Egbert, your pride awakened by the contemptuous treatment of these,' waving his hand towards a group of ladies. 'Such is not the state in which to approach the altar of your God. Let not then the insults of these people lead you into sin. Of what regard to you is the whole world, if you lose your own soul? Lady Eastville, you are reserved for better things. Exert your naturally fine understanding, recal the precepts of your father—he was a Christian in more than words—then in a few days I shall hope to see you kneel at that altar, not influenced by worldly passion, but in meek humility, forgiving, as a sinful mortal should, those who have offended you, and hoping forgiveness from him that hath no sin.'

" ' Bless you, bless you, for your advice,' she exclaimed. ' How hard it is to avoid sin, when the Evil One assumes so many forms to seduce us ! I had persuaded myself that my enthusiasm to approach the altar was a tribute of respect to God, not a feeling of resentment to beings like myself. But you have judged rightly.'

" Having uttered these words, she permitted Doctor Jerold to place her in Lady Delmore's carriage, in which the old dowager had patiently waited. No sooner had it driven off, than the reverend parson, taking advantage of several of

his congregation being confined within the holy precincts of the church by the continued rain, began to lecture them ; and being greatly excited, for it seems he is a sincere friend of the East-villes, he spoke with more energy than he generally exerts. Having first called out in a loud voice, I suppose by way of a text, ' He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her,' he descanted on the heinousness of scandal, and the want of Christian charity in too readily imputing blame to others. Seeing some of his saintly flock look very prim, he exclaimed, ' Suppose not for a moment that I mean to uphold or excuse adultery, a vice so terrible in its results ; far from it : the laws of God, of nature, and of man, justly award punishment to the crime. In earlier times, the most painful death was pronounced on the adulteress, while shame and sorrow were the inheritance of her children ; and if a more lenient age is less severe in its decrees, still in the eyes of God the crime is equally culpable ; for the great Spirit of Truth is not to be altered or deceived by human institutions. But the more serious the charge, the more slow we should be in the accusation. Saint Paul ranks envying and revilings among our most deadly sins ; and perhaps at no period were these crimes more general or destructive in their effects. At present, however, as time presses, I shall only

one of its many evils : it destroys our virtue, and our respect for our own spe-
nenever a love of scandal, or indiscrimi-
ure of others is admitted into a family,
lly undermines their morals. Youth
ed to hear the conduct of their
nces censured, gradually lose their
f vice, by imperceptible degrees, and
feel less compunction in practising
gain, the secret consciousness of their
morality renders them doubtful of the
of virtue in others ; and thus dissimu-
spicion, and jealousy are introduced, de-
the confidence and love so necessary to
esthetic happiness. In answer to this, you
: if the culprit is guilty, is she to be
ceived within the pale of society, and
told, ‘ Go, and sin no more ?’
, no, vice should never be upheld ; for
ent of every other motive, it were an
dent ; but on that very account, none
e condemned without sufficient proof.
setting aside the noblest act of our
e, and adopting the darkest error of
quisition :—an error which, by awaken-
ndignation and inquiry of enlightened
first undermined the mighty fabric of
proud hierarchy. But even when the
guilty, why torture the victim, and

triumph in its agony? It is setting aside the most beautiful doctrines of Christ, whose divine miracles were all practised in works of mercy and charity. Incapable of sin in his own nature, he never rejected the supplications of the afflicted penitent, but declared that he came to call sinners to repentance. Oh! ye of little faith, how have you this day acted? You have shunned and insulted a most unhappy lady, who, for upwards of four years, has lived among you in the practice of every Christian virtue, and that on the mere report of a low-bred menial, supported by a few trivial circumstances. Far from following your Saviour's precept, as given in my text, there was not one of you who, overlooking your own sins, would not have cast a stone at Lady Eastville, till you raised a cairn to mark for future ages her supposed guilt, and the stern punishment you awarded.

“‘Now, hear my resolution: I am your pastor, long—too long, has this parish been notorious for its love of scandal, and I admit that I have been too slothful in tracing its source; but from henceforth, the most malignant of you shall not accuse me of carelessness on that head, for wheresoever I hear its echo, I will spare no pains to trace its origin, and, according to the power granted by Ecclesiastical law, will submit its author to castigation.’

“With these words, he coldly saluted his congregation, and retired with Doctor Jerold. His flock soon followed his example, and went home to digest his sermon with what appetite they might; but I answer for it, Mr. Coaltsley will never again be a popular preacher. You may guess that my account of this scene afforded high amusement at the mess. Old Chilli’s fancy was so tickled at the idea of fat Mrs. Peakly being bumped up and down in the ducking-stool, that he actually invited us all to sup with him on a lobster salad and champagne. You must know Mrs. Peakly has five daughters, of different complexions, sizes, and ages, all solicitous to enter into the holy bonds of matrimony. Surely amidst such a variety, men’s fancies should be pleased : so thinks the provident mother, and, for that purpose, she has been most liberal of her hospitalities to our corps ; and to exalt these,—her maidens,—above their fellows, she has used the rancour of her tongue in abusing every other woman, married or single, in the city of York, or its neighbourhood, for ten miles round. Could she have heard our remarks, as inspired by the champagne, I believe even the perspective hope of marrying some of her daughters, would not tempt her to repeat her entertainments to us gallant sons of Mars ; but this, as far as we go, is of no consequence, for we have received orders

for the south of Ireland. I believe Limerick will be our head-quarters. I leave this to-morrow with the first detachment ; but as I have applied for leave of absence, hope soon to return to England, when you shall hear from me, and if I can be of any service, command me.

“Remember, Freville, if there are parts of my letter which you consider smack too much of levity, I only follow your example in adopting the strain. Moreover, I thought this way of handling the subject, at least in parts, would be most acceptable to you. I must tell you, though, in sober seriousness, that the scene in the church very deeply affected me, and has made such an impression upon me, that it is not without reluctance I despatch this (in part) flippant missive.

“To-morrow your dressing-case and luggage shall be forwarded by the coach to London. Take a friend’s advice, and be careful of your leg : it would be a greater loss than anything else in Europe, for you could never replace it, except by a wooden one ; and so, Freville, farewell.

“CHARLES MELLISH.”

On reading this type of Charles Mellish’s genius, every former sentiment yielded to grief and indignation at hearing of the sneering contempt and ribaldry to which Lady Eastville, the purest, the noblest of her sex was exposed, by my mad folly ; and I hastily resolved, let the

my presumption, and then refuse his
though by so doing I should be hooted
regiment as a coward, and be a target
er of scorn to point at.

formed this resolution, I fancied my-
eigned, and attempted to lie down,
was frightfully swollen; but there was
on on my breathing:—the image of
shed from her home, and her name
out in the public courts, pressed on
again, a sensation as if my head was a
seized me. I have a recollection of
rom the couch, uttering frantic cries.
rice I heard the door open, and saw
ig in. I had a strange idea that they
ting all the air from the room, and
to be suffocated. I called piteously to
op, then bounding to the window,
to atoms.

hile, Abernethy, accompanied by the

request, he would himself accompany me to Yorkshire on the following day, for I raved about setting off immediately. Having, at length, succeeded in tranquillizing me, he retired, sending an apothecary to remain with me all night. My fever was so severe, that for three weeks my recovery was considered doubtful. That period formed a blank in my existence.

On the first day of returning consciousness, I remember suffering from intense thirst; my tongue actually clove to the roof of my mouth. I moaned, and made an effort to put out my hand in search of some drink, but fell back from debility. I had no other sensation, no recollection of the past. Often remaining for some time in this state, I heard a number of voices in the room:—to my shattered nerves they appeared tremendously loud. My next perception was that of being raised up, laid upon something flat, and carried down stairs; then a gush of cold air passed over my face, more fully reviving me. On the instant, a horrible idea seized me—they supposed me dead, and were going to bury me alive! I tried to scream; but the anguish of my mind rendered me speechless; then I struggled to move my limbs, this effort threw me into a convulsion, and again all consciousness vanished.

It was a week from this, as I afterwards learned,

when I awoke out of a long and refreshing slumber ; the crisis of my fever had passed, and I was pronounced convalescent ; my ideas were less confused, but still I had no recollection of any circumstance beyond having been very ill. My strength was so far returned that I was able to move my position ; no sooner had I done so, than some person advanced, raised my head, handed me a delicious draught, and then arranged my pillows. Again I slept for several hours : on awakening I drew back my curtain to see if any one was near. Imagine my astonishment at finding myself not in my sordid lodging in Piccadilly, but in a most sumptuous apartment whose large windows were shaded by draperies of green silk ; my bed in the form of a canopy was hung with the same rich material, while in place of the chicken quills, my head was supported on cushions of down. On a table near me were beautiful filagree baskets of silver with the most delicious fruits, and at a short distance, I observed a quakerly-looking woman engaged in reading. On hearing me stir she advanced, offered me some mixture which I drank, then laying a basket of grapes next to my hand, glided from the apartment.

All this time I never spoke, for I felt persuaded that I laboured under some illusion resulting from my late illness, and feared to dispel it.

he had left the principal part of his wealth to Etienne, the old Nabob provided amply for you. However, that is now of no consequence, for Etienne having made no disposition of his wealth, you come in as heir-at-law to the vast possessions of your grandfather."

"Yes," I exclaimed with bitterness, "and a small portion of that wealth being granted to my unfortunate parents might have altered both their destinies,—for the struggles of poverty led in a great measure to their early deaths."

"However," said Mellish, "you should not be severe on the old fellow, for you can see by his will he left you a noble fortune."

"Ay," I cried, "because he could not take it with him to his grave; probably if he had lived, he would have murmured at purchasing my promotion."

"Well, Freville, don't agitate your weak frame by this emotion; it would not do to quit the world just as your prospects have become so brilliant."

"All this time, Mellish," I said, "you have not explained where I am. Is this house a part of my present possessions?"

"Oh, true!" he answered laughing, "you know, Freville, how often you amused me with an account of Mr. Moneymore's reception of you, when from your respectable lodging, a garret in Oxford

set, and clad in rather seedy garments you
summed to call on the great man in his great
se. Now hear and venerate the power of
; no sooner did he receive intelligence, by an
ess from the Pondicherry agent, of Sir Roger's
h, and your being sole heir, than he became
ntly enlightened to your merit. You were
nger a presuming, troublesome youth, impor-
ng him with applications to his respected
noble employer. No, you were an amiable,
lame, accomplished person, who had been
efully and cruelly maltreated by Sir Roger,
d-hearted, selfish old Nabob. Then to leave
of your merit amidst the noise of Piccadilly,
with such wretched accommodation was out
e question; so the moment Abernethy con-
ed you able to be removed, you were con-
d here to this house, and treated as one who
the power of returning kindness, not as a
devil like me, who must carve out his for-
with his good sword."

joined Mellish in his hearty laugh, and then
d Moneymore for his cringing spirit, and
of gain. Avarice not being my own passion
s very severe in condemning it in others;
ver, I had no idea of depriving him of my
y. First, I hated trouble, and was quite
petent for business; then in despite of his
ry and selfishness, he was strictly honour-

able in money matters, and very independent in his circumstances. I already began to see myself a man of consequence, a patron of the arts. Heretofore from infancy I had had to struggle with sordid means, but now I had the sole and entire possession of an immense wealth. How far I was worth the fortune thus placed in my keeping, the events of this memoir will best prove.

CHAPTER IV.

Now recovered from my fever, my leg, been so long kept quiet, being permitted to its usual form and strength—arionetcy and one of the richest comngland; and how did I feel upon this power—for wealth is power! Not ving did I offer up at the throne of r recovery, not one plan did I formovement, or good of poor suffering Some gleams of ambition did indeed nd, but they all tended towards my lizement, towards the gratification of ible, low-thinking, selfish vanity; ut passing thoughts. With restored ardent love of Clara returned; she tant dream by night, my sole engrossy day, when I could command the Mellish, who with a kind of reckless, humoured my passion; and as he ad that Lady Eastville loved me, and und thoughtlessness, was very far from account the moral consequences of

tempt to gain upon her affections.

"Worse than lose you cannot," thus he
"believe me, no matter how good
people may be, wealth and rank always
possessors in the opinions of others ; ov
they are particularly influential ; besides,
were poor you had no power to act but
you are rich you possess the means.
confess to you, were it my own case, I
hesitate a moment. Here is a woman
you have been devotedly attached from y
hood, who was aware of your passion
ever saw or heard of her present husband
haughty, and, therefore, unloveable &
Eastville. She must have given you c
ment, or a fellow of your discernment
have left her after her father's death with
persuasion that your love was returned.

I interrupted him, saying : " In pity to
this friend, and advice relative to her

boy, Herbert, he has refused, even at the ties of his own friends to let Lady Eastville's little daughter, whom at a great risk to life he removed from under her maternal care and who is supposed to be in a rapid convalescence. Distracted at the child's danger, the lady submitted quietly to this tyranny, in the condition that Doctor Jerold should be permitted to attend the dear invalid."

"Monster!" I exclaimed; "dared he to refuse my request?"

"He certainly did at first," said Mellish; "but since he has heard that Jerold is in attendance, he entertains no hope of the child's recovery."

"This intelligence afflicted me deeply, for I knew that my dear Clara loved her little girl; however, from all the many conversations Mellish held with me on this subject, and the fears and hopes which discussed me, I shall at once detail the extraordinary confession which I was guilty—from which, when I look back, I shrink with horror. I must have been either a madman or a fool, or as my Irish servant of ours—Peggy Maher, has said, 'The devil must have had possession of me intirely.' Impelled by a passion so inordinate that a rational mind can scarcely admit its belief, I had persuaded myself in the spite of Clara's contempt and rejection—before and after her marriage—of my impor-

sentment, would lessen her respect
I had become so indurated that I
joyed her little girl was dying, as if
of deserting her or an apprehended
stigma ever cast on the daughter or
might form a barrier to her eloping with
wild project I had in view, even at this
period, makes me tremble when I think
merit and its awful results. I mailed
Clara a letter fully expressive of my
tenderness, expatiated on the great wealth
I had just come into possession, bitter
that I had not gained it ere her fate was
bly united with that of the cruel tyrant.
I then elaborately spoke of our power
him and his authority at defiance, and
some southern clime, where, in the midst of
every luxury, we might despise the customs
of English society; or if its echo should

best beloved boy, should accompany us, and be only second to her adored self in my affections. In conclusion, I said,

"I know, Clara, that from your extreme delicacy and mistaken prejudices you will at first be startled at the boldness of this request. I do not hurry you, my love, so weigh in your mind every circumstance; remember on the one side you remain a condemned wife, neglected, despised and exposed to all the mortification of insults such as you received in the Church of Saint Mary's—the very description of which almost deprived me of reason—besides, in the society of your neighbourhood you would never again be received, nor indeed in any part of England, with the same respect as a few weeks since you commanded. Whereas, on the other hand, if you will fly with me you shall be removed from those vexations, and surrounded by all the pomp and luxuries of life, adored, nay worshipped by one who could never, even in idea, form a wish of happiness unconnected with you; then the very love which has proved your enemy will be your friend, by making you my wife. Oh, Clara! the prospect of your being solely mine fills me with an ecstasy which seems a foretaste of Heaven. It may be that from timidity you will hesitate to answer this, so, my love, I shall not press you on

the subject, nor—though to my impatience every day which separates us appears an age—shall I hurry you; but on this day three weeks, on the 24th of December, I will call at the Terrace about three in the forenoon, I know that is the hour when your servants are engaged, and should you, my soul's idol, consent to fly with me, a sincere friend upon whose honour I can confidently have a chariot-and-four in readiness near the stile where the York coach passes. It will soon bear us away from the scene of your present mortification; as to our destination, that depends upon your own wishes. I live but to love, to obey, to serve you, my worshipped one.

“Yours for ever,

“FREVILLE DEERHURST.”

Mellish, who at this period was full of unreflecting levity, and mad after frolic and adventure, readily proposed to be, as he termed it, Cupid's Mercury. After giving him numerous charges about having the letter delivered in the safest and most private manner, I committed it to his care, for, unacquainted with what measures Sir Egbert's jealousy had adopted, I dared not venture on the public post, and, infatuated as I was, could not presume to send Mellish to the Terrace. The next day saw him depart on his extraordinary

mission with as much pleasure as if it secured my success.

It were useless to enlarge upon my feelings after his departure. In our wisdom, we had concluded that if Lady Eastville despised my overtures, she would instantly write an indignant refusal, if not, her silence gave consent. Thus I dreaded in place of wishing for an answer.

A few days elapsed, and then I heard from Mellish, who wrote in high spirits. He had travelled direct from London to the town of F——, where, as already mentioned, the scene had taken place in St. Mary's Church, and immediately proceeded to the post-office, which, being kept at a bookseller's, was a lounge for all idlers. He had not been long there, when a footman in the Eastville livery entered, and demanded of the office-keeper were there any letters for the Terrace, remarking, "Mrs. Waller requested that you would not detain me, as her Ladyship expects some of consequence."

Mellish in a careless tone inquired, "had Sir Egbert returned to the Terrace?"

The footman stared at him, and then replied :
"No, Sir; but we hope he soon may."

Mellish, then by a *coup-de-main*, took Lady Eastville's letter from the office-keeper, slipping mine in its place. Unsuspicious of the trick, the

messenger immediately departed; Mellish then employed the postman to select some books. While so engaged, he threw back Lady Eastville's letter without looking at the place from which it was directed; and, proud of his success, hurried into the reading-room to acquaint me with what he had done.

"Freville," he wrote, "this lucky chance of forwarding your letter without delay, augurs well to your hopes. It would be an act of madness, and, in place of your figuring as a gallant, gay Lothario, your friends would be for locking you up in a lunatic asylum,—a bad way to enjoy Sir Roger's accumulated wealth;—altogether I have to congratulate myself that there was no delay, for an express arrived this morning which obliges me to set off for Worcester, where an aunt of mine is on the point of death. However, under any emergency, you may depend upon my active friendship; consequently, if in the mean time I do not hear from you, on the 24th of December, according to previous arrangements, I shall have all in preparation for your elopement with this Circe."

It was but a few days after Mellish had quitted London, that I received this letter, and it wanted upwards of a fortnight of the time I had spent for calling upon Clara. How often, during that interim, did I curse myself for not having done

mediate interview. Positively my
the postman knocked, lest he
sal from her, amounted to in-
s fortnight at length passed, and
hus she had tacitly consented to
arrangements with Mr. Money-
mediate command of an immense
purchased some of the most
in London ; for in all things I
the more exalted mind of Clara
s vanity, and then set off for
of spirits to which no words
1.

mail as far as York ; on stop-
nd a few lines from Mellish,
ar on Friday evening—it was
e would expect me near the
overed a convenient hollow just
chariot could stand unobserved,
he had engaged four of the
England, and a pair of trusty
drive us to the devil if we
the way of fun. In short, his
high glee, and with true Irish

t at York, and next day rode
hough I had but few acquaint-
still, from the apprehension of
on who might recognize me,

more particularly Doctor Jerold, I did not venture to the inn, but, dismissing my horse—which was a hired one—strolled up the street in the direction which led to the Terrace; but I had not proceeded far, when I was overtaken by a sharp shower of sleet. This might have been expected, as the weather was intensely cold and gloomy. I hurried into a confectioner's shop, which was near, and, ordering some refreshments, requested to be shown a private apartment. They ushered me into one where there was a cheerful fire; I tried to drink some wine and water, but my agitation was so powerful I could not swallow. In another hour my suspense would be ended, and I should either be the accepted lover of Clara, or banished from her for ever. A quarter of an hour thus passed, and, although the sleet still continued, I was preparing to go, when I heard a horse stop at the door, followed by a stir in the shop, then a voice cried out:—

“This way, Sir Egbert; you will find a fire and refreshments in this apartment.”

Oh! how my coward heart shrunk with shame and consternation at the idea of meeting him. I looked about to find some escape; there was none, so as a last resource, I rushed to the window, and hid myself behind the curtains. All this was the act of a moment; the next Sir Egbert entered, and flung himself into the seat I had

just vacated, but for some time I was too much excited to observe him, though from my position I had the power, without being seen.

He had turned towards the table on which his arms rested, his face buried in his hands. Near him, with a frightened look, stood the young girl who attended the shop; neither spoke, when suddenly he roared out, "Where is the brandy? I asked for brandy." She pointed to the bottles on a distant table, and ran off; he rose, approached it, and I had a full view of his countenance. Would to Heaven I had not seen it! for never can I forget its haggard expression, or the unearthly glare of his eyes as they glanced wildly around. He filled out a glass of brandy, swallowed it, then drank off another, dashed some money on the table, and quitted the shop. In a few moments after, I saw him gallop off on his bay hunter, the same he rode on the day he had saved my life, and had me conveyed to his house. I watched the direction he took: it was the one opposite to the Terrace.

I did not witness this scene, nor the change in Sir Egbert, without deep emotion. Good Heaven, I thought, can that miserable-looking man, indulging in low intoxication, be the moral, dignified, noble, Sir Egbert Eastville—the very pattern of a polished gentleman, whom a few weeks since I saw surrounded by friends, and by his lovely lady

and children, of whom he was so justly proud and fond. Drops of agony rolled down my forehead, as conscience whispered "yes," and thou art the fell destroyer, the wretch who, to a degrading passion, has sacrificed his peace and happiness, and forfeited thy soul's repose. These reflections were intolerable; I started up, rung impatiently for the attendant, and, assuming a careless tone, said, "Is Sir Egbert Eastville at present staying at the Terrace?"

She answered in a tone of surprise,

"La, Sir! no. I thought every person knew that he never resided there since his lady put up with the strange officer."

"But I am a stranger," I said, "a friend of Sir Egbert's, and wish to know all the particulars of the business."

"La, Sir, it is so melancholy," she answered; as she curtsied for the money I handed her; "and I can tell you all about it, for I am the niece of Mr. Walter, Sir Egbert's butler. You must know"—

Before she could proceed, company entered, and she was called away. The clock over the mantel-piece chimed the half-hour, in another I should be with Clara; what need, then, for inquiring? so I hurried off, without waiting for further information.

Although not raining at the time, the clouds

dark and heavy, it appeared as if every
ey would burst forth, and there was a
ing wind. All this was a matter of
ion, as it rendered me less open to
; and as I pressed onward, I strove
e recollection of Sir Egbert by the
of again meeting Clara, and the un-
ppiness I should enjoy in her society;
n. There was an oppression on my
a terrible foreboding of woe. As I as-
small hillock which interrupted the
h I had chosen, I saw, but at a great
e chariot which was to bear Clara and
e Terrace. It moved slowly; Mellish's
dship, it appeared, had anticipated the
haps, discovering it, he proceeded at a
at once to elude observation, and not
e horses kept standing in the cold.
usion seemed satisfactory, and the
preparations for the event exhilarated
and with lighter steps I bounded for-
reached the house. How like a thief
and felt as I stood trembling with
eyes at the door, summoning up
demand entrance into the hospitable
here so lately I had been an honoured
t when at length I rang the bell, and
me so, looked around, how was I
the ravages a few short weeks had

wrought! The beautiful exotics, Clara's peculiar care, lay withered and scattered on the steps; the china vases that had contained them, shivered to atoms; the luxuriant creepers, lately so resplendent of sweets, lay trailing on the ground, and on the slope of the walk opposite the windows of the apartment I had occupied, rank weeds sprang up amongst the knots of evergreens and flower-baskets. It was not the desolation of winter alone that reigned at the Terrace, but of neglect, of recklessness,—the recklessness which proceeds from the bitter unconsciousness of knowing, that the crushed heart of its possessor no longer expanded to the beautiful pleasures of nature.

"This is unbearable," I said, as none appeared to attend, and obeying the impulse of my impatience, my first soft, low ring was succeeded by a loud one. This answered, the door was thrown open, and a porter in the Eastville livery appeared; making some apology for not having before attended.

"It is of no consequence," I said, trying to speak boldly; "but is Lady Eastville at home?"

"Yes, Sir; but as she has been an invalid, she never admits company. Shall I enter your name?" and he opened his book.

"Is she confined to her apartment?" I demanded, no longer able to command my emotions.

“so,” he answered; “but since the late
family events, she seldom receives
; more especially now as, I believe, she
soon to quit the Terrace.

He put a guinea into his hand, for his words
gave me of some fearful apprehensions, which
had hung about my heart, though I dared
not to embody them. Turning to him, I

“so kind as to go yourself and acquaint her
with, that I have come from London on
a matter of the utmost importance.”

My money had gained his good will, and he

“Will I not announce your name, Sir?”

“Needless,” I answered, “unless Lady
refuses to see me.”

He bowed, retired, and in less time than I had
expected returned to say:

“Pleased, Sir, to enter, and her Ladyship
will be with you in a few moments.”

He did not express my pleasure as I followed
him, he ushered me into the dining-room,
where, in refreshments, stirred up the fire, every
thing then casting furtive glances towards me
went up and down, to wile away the anxious
time. It was a quarter of an hour after he had
gone, and no one appeared, and positively the pro-
pensity which reigned throughout the house,

and the howling of the blast without, as it rushed through the withered leaves, were perfectly appalling, while everything else helped to increase the nervous weakness to which I was reduced. I was looking out of one of the windows, when I suddenly heard the door open, and then quickly close it was, it must be Clara. I sprang forward and stood before—not Clara, but a tall, stately, elderly looking lady. The shock, the disappointment was too great; I staggered back some steps, gazing at her without the power to speak, although I saw she eyed me with extreme attention. She was the first to break silence by saying :

“ You sent to see me on particular business; may I request to know the name of the person who honours me ? ”

I bowed, but remained speechless.

“ Good Heaven, speak ! ” she cried. “ Has any accident happened to Sir Egbert or his boys, Sir ? You terrify me beyond belief by this mysterious silence.”

“ Let me not alarm you, Madam,” I replied. “ I know of nothing that could make you uneasy; but there is some mistake. I came here to see Lady Eastville, who is a very old friend of mine; and I have something to communicate relative to a connexion of hers which I know will be interesting.”

The lady sighed, and then said :

“ You are, I should think, Sir Freville Deerhurst.”

I coloured with confusion.

“ Sit down,” she said in a kind tone, rolling a chair towards me, “ and here, take this,” and she handed me a glass of wine.

I attempted to swallow it, but could not ; and then in a husky voice exclaimed :

“ Now, Madam, it is your turn to alarm me. Is Lady Eastville ill, or does she indeed refuse to see me ?”

“ I am the Dowager Lady Eastville,” she replied mildly, “ Sir Egbert’s aunt-in-law, and in that all this cruel mistake originates.”

“ Is Clara, Sir Egbert’s wife, here ?” I said impatiently, rising as I spoke to ring the bell ; then, aware of my impetuosity, by way of an excuse I continued, “ Sir Roger Deerhurst is dead, and as he was her connexion, and as he has left unbounded wealth, I must see her, for I am his heir.”

Lady Eastville stood up, followed me, looked wistfully in my face, then grasping my wrist, in low, distinct accents said :

“ Young man, great as have been your errors, still I pity you ; for alas ! I know what it is to lose those we love. Clara, Sir Egbert’s wife, is dead.”

She had only whispered this fatal sentence, and

hollow accents, "then, madam, I meet you;" and I made an effort to bow from the room with perfect composure.

I had a sensation as if I should fall from earth, and I tramped my feet steadily on the ground, and stretched out my arms to myself; and thus I moved forward, under the storm of sleet and snow that reigned round me, unconscious of everything but the fear that Clara, Sir Egbert's wife, is dead—and borne on the wings of the wind.

I had only reached the avenue when he rushed after me with my hat, which I had thrown down. As he spoke I gazed unconsciously at him, and he placed it on my head, offering me an umbrella, which I motioned away. As I saw him and the children of the household, I smiled at me, and laugh. I heeded them not, but followed my path, unconscious whither it led. The day was rapidly closing, and the storm

foaming horses passed over my face. Loud voices called to go out of the way, or I should be rolled over; but had an earthquake shaken the world to its centre, I had not sense nor a wish to protect myself. The cracking of whips, the exclamations, nay, curses of men increased: then rude hands dragged me—I fell to the earth—I saw the flash of lights—felt my arm held tight, my coat torn off—a warm stream gushed forth, I breathed more freely, grew deadly sick, then all consciousness vanished.

CHAPTER V.

It was very late on the following morning as I recovered from the effects of a powerful anæsthesia that had been administered. I felt extremely weak and languid, and there was a strange confusion in my head, but still my recollection of the past day, until I fell on the road, was perfectly vivid—alas! the awful fact of Clara's death could never, under any circumstances, be forgotten. At the time I awoke, I found myself reclining on a couch in the apartment I had formerly occupied in Dr. Jerold's house. My left arm, from which it appeared I had been profusely bled, was supported in a sling. Opposite to me sat Charles Mellish, looking very pale, and with an air of deep dejection very unlike his usually gay, smiling countenance. Addressing him in a tone of profound grief, I exclaimed:

“Oh! Mellish, is not this a sad conclusion of our adventure? To think that Clara, so bright, so beautiful, should be——” I could not finish the sentence, but uttering convulsive groans, continued: “At the very moment I was anticipating

the raptures of our meeting, she was lying in the cold earth. Mellish, you cannot wish me to revive this terrible grief."

"It is indeed awful," he answered, mournfully, "and at present I am almost as unequal as yourself to dwell upon the recollection. Let us then, Freville, converse upon some other subject."

"Impossible," I answered, vehemently; "it, to me alone, engrosses me. In the shock of hearing of the event, I was so bereft of reflexion that I was incapable of making any inquiries as to the particulars—yet I would willingly learn all; nay, I would not hesitate to acquaint me. I know Clara, my soul's idol, is gone for ever, and, knowing this, nothing now can either soothe or add to my affliction."

His countenance was almost convulsed with emotion, and it was some time before he answered; then he said:

Freville, from the inmost recesses of my soul I am passionate to you; the unfortunate lady expired more than a fortnight ago: the exact circumstances attending her death you must inquire of Jerold."

"A fortnight ago," I reiterated, "then probably I did not receive my accursed letter. Oh, if I had she received it at the hour of approaching dissolution, how her pure soul would have shuddered at my guilt! Mellish, think you what can

have become of the hateful scroll? Methinks the knowledge of Sir Egbert's reading it would add bitterness, even to my present regrets."

Mellish, who had quitted his seat, and was standing in the window with his back turned towards me, did not answer, until I again impatiently addressed him; he then replied:

"The letter is now in Dr. Jerold's hands. On that head I was as much, nay, more to blame than yourself. You, at least, had passion as an excuse; but I had no motive, no object, but an inexorable, profligate levity." Saying these words, he paced up and down the room.

"Was her death sudden," I inquired in a tone of anguish, "or did the anxiety, and sorrow, and mortification to which I exposed her press on her spirits and destroy her? If so I am a murderer—the worst of murderers."

He rested his head on the mantel-piece, and said in low accents: "Freville, add not horror to the hapless lady's loss by this wild talk; her death, I believe, was sudden. Surely it matters not how it occurred; we had far better not dwell on her memory."

"Ay," I cried vehemently, "in small regrets like yours we banish the unpleasant thought; but where the whole soul is engrossed with the feeling, we cling to our despair, and even in her grave the memory of Clara is dearer to me than all this

world contains. Indulge me, then, by enlarging on every circumstance attending her illness: let me not think she died neglected, unhappy. Was her little girl restored to her care? or, perhaps, she lost her, and that preyed on her health?"

"The child still lingers," said Mellish, sadly; "but Jerold thinks she cannot struggle on much longer. Sir Egbert was fixed in his resolve on that subject, and never allowed her to return to the Terrace."

"Monster of cruelty!" I exclaimed, "to separate an amiable mother from her sick child. But I rejoice to say he is justly punished; for by chance I saw him yesterday, and never did I behold such a spectacle of human woe." This was said with the malice of a fiend.

A flush of anger dyed the face of Mellish, before so pale; he looked fiercely, then addressing me in a severe, solemn tone, said: "As your partner in guilt I would sympathize with you; but this injustice on your part must excite the abhorrence of all men. Freville, you and I have been the aggressors, not the truly unfortunate and bereaved Sir Egbert."

"You are right, Mellish," I said, reaching out my hand; "my best friend, excuse me, my mind borders on the verge of madness."

He shook my hand warmly, exclaiming: "No,

Freville, I have proved myself anything but a judicious friend. Far from dissuading you against your illicit and most unhappy attachment, I encouraged you in it by my advice, and became the abettor of your wild project; but terrible has been my punishment, and sincere shall be my penitence." On uttering these words he rushed from the apartment.

Soon after, Doctor Jerold entered. I rose to receive him and express my thanks for his attentions; but he returned my advances with a cold, stately bow. He looked miserably ill: his features were quite pallid and rigid, I sunk back on my seat; he stood with his back to the fire, and thus we both remained for a full half hour without speaking to, or looking at each other. At length he rung the bell, ordered luncheon, and advancing close to me, said: "Mr. Deerhurst, do you find your arm painful?" I answered in the negative. "Will you permit me to feel your wrist?" I reached out my arm. "Ah! this is well," he said, "you are not very feverish, so I think without danger you may leave here to-night." At the instant the footman entered. "Tell Mr. Mellish," he said addressing him, "that his friend is quite able to travel, so by sunset this afternoon, he may have all in preparation for his departure."

Although nothing in the intensity of my grief

could much affect me, still Doctor Jerold's austerity and impatience to get me out of his house offended me, and I said coldly : " I fear I have been a great intruder on your hospitality. I can only regret it, and in apologising, assure you I am still ignorant how I came here."

He answered in a stern tone, " Sir Freville, at the time, I believe, that you possessed little consciousness, so will now explain the circumstance. On your quitting the Terrace yesterday evening, the Dowager Lady Eastville, shocked at your temerity in coming to this neighbourhood, and terrified lest you might encounter Sir Egbert when the most fatal consequences must have been the result, sent off an express to acquaint me and to entreat that I would find you out and prevail on you to quit Yorkshire. Sir Freville, although from my knowledge of your character, few acts of yours, however reckless, could surprise me, still I had not anticipated your visit to the Terrace. It seems, however, you were unacquainted with the sad event which has so deeply afflicted us all." He sighed audibly, and then continued speaking very rapidly, " No sooner did her Ladyship's express reach me, than I set off ; but had not proceeded far, when the coachman called out that there was a drunken man on the road, and that he could not stop the horses ; happily I possess great presence of mind, and am

accustomed to contingencies, so I sprang out, literally dragged you into a ditch, else in less than a moment you must have been crushed to death."

"Would to heaven that I had!" I exclaimed fervently.

"God did not so will it," was his cold reply. "My horses proceeded rapidly for some time, and I was at a loss to know how to act, when opportunely I saw a chariot-and-four dashing along. I loudly hailed it; it proved to be your friend, Mr. Mellish, returning from his friendly and libertine adventure. On the lamps being lighted, we discovered it was you whose life I had saved. You had received no injury, but as you were much convulsed, I bled you in the arm; and as your appearing at the hotel would awaken great curiosity, I ordered you to be removed here. My housekeeper is the only one of my present domestics who has ever seen you; and as I can depend upon her secresy, the rumour of your arrival is not likely to spread."

In a subdued voice I said, "Then, Doctor, to much past kindness, I have now to thank you for saving my life, valueless as I hold it."

He answered petulantly, and casting on me a look of ineffable contempt: "Young man, mark me; when at some risk I sprang from my carriage to save a fellow-creature from a frightful

death, I knew not it was you ; had I, my limbs would not have obeyed the impulse of my charity, and you must have perished. But, Sir Freville Deerhurst, mistake me not for your friend, for there lives not the man I more utterly despise, nay, abhor. Circumstances threw you under my protection, and the duties of my profession compelled me to grant you assistance. These obligations are now at an end, and as soon as the darkness of the night favours your escape from observation, you quit this house for ever. May I never again behold you ; but should chance ever throw us together—and chance alone, on my side, ever can—presume not, dare not, to claim me as an acquaintance, or I will proclaim you aloud as a villain—the most persevering of villains !”

“ Come, come, Doctor,” I exclaimed, starting up, “ whatever my acts, you have no right to use such opprobrious words ; and I shall demand and expect, before an hour hence, the satisfaction to which such language entitles me.”

“ None of your bullying looks at me, Sir Freville,” he retorted. “ This fatal letter is your justification, and my defence for an excess of passion, which under less provocation, I admit, would have been insulting and ungentlemanly.” He pulled from his pocket my letter to Clara ; it was neatly crushed and torn. As he handed it to me

he seemed much affected, and in a subdued voice said, "Here, this is yours; I would not have been its author for ten times the wealth you now possess. In her dying hour, Lady Eastville returned it to you, with her full forgiveness for all the disgrace and misery you had brought on her. But it is for God not me to judge between you."

He was hurrying from the apartment, when I called out :

"Doctor Jerold, are you insensible to my sufferings? Will you not reflect on my uncontrollable passion, and tell me all about my lost Clara?"

"Yours she never was!" he exclaimed passionately. "Others may believe her guilty, but well I know her angel voice never uttered a falsehood. And, Sir Freville, can you so far mock yourself and me, as to uphold passion as an excuse for crime? That, indeed, would level all morality. Suppose riches your passion, are you to break into a man's house and rob him? If cruelty, are you to torture him? Strange perversion, to cast a halo round some of our vices, and yet start with horror at the very idea of practising others not more culpable in the eyes of God, and often less destructive in society."

"I spoke to a man who never loved, and consequently can have no sympathy with me," I answered. "Still, Doctor Jerold, when you"

solve to refuse satisfaction, you should be careful not to insult; and I must say, it is unmanly and ungenerous to treat me in this manner, when I have no power of escape—moreover, under your own roof.”

“In some respect,” he answered, “you are right. But, Sir Freville, your own words are my excuse; my excessive passion was uncontrollable, and under its influence I rudely insulted you.”

“You do not admit it as such,” I replied mullenly.

“No, and for that reason I regret it has led me to forget the respect due to myself by speaking to you in such language; and as I will not fight, I apologize for the same.” With these words he retired.

Mellish soon after joined me. I acquainted him with Jerold’s rudeness, requesting he would advise me how to act, as I considered I ought to compel him to a duel.

He answered gravely, “Freville, I see through your object. In the anguish of your mind, you would gladly fight, in the desperate hope of being shot.”

I interrupted him, exclaiming with vivacity, “You are right, Mellish; the most painful death is preferable to my irremediable sorrow.”

“It may be so to your present view,” he replied in the same tone; “but it were in vain to

“ Good heaven ! Freville,” he cried with increased agitation, “ there is no mystery ; why admit these strange fancies ? Forget you the position you held was as the lover, not relative of Lady Eastville ? Reflect upon all that has occurred, and then, even in the present abstraction of your mind, you must admit that common prudence and delicacy forbid any person communicating with you or me on the subject. However, I am ready to explain how I first learned the sad event ; and then by our past friendship, I entreat of you not to renew the subject. You are aware that I was proceeding to the appointed spot, a hollow, near the stile leading into the back ground of the Terrace. Well, in my impatience after the mad frolic, I was a full hour too early ; this annoyed me, and for the first time I began to reflect on what might be the result if Lady Eastville despised your advances, or Sir Egbert discovered them. To relieve these unpleasant suggestions, and also to drive off the intense cold,—for I was chilled from travelling all night,—I resolved to walk forward, ordering the chariot to move slowly, and giving my worthy assistants advice, what answers to make should any inquiries be made. I had not proceeded far, when I was met by Mr. Collet, better known by the name of Old Dick Collet. He had frequently dined at our mess, and being as jolly a huntsman as ever rode.

was a great favourite. He immediately recognized me; we got into conversation, and—and—and, in short, Freville, he told me that Lady Eastville had been dead upwards of a fortnight! It matters not what I felt at the information; your own regret was scarcely less vivid. As soon as I could disengage myself from Dick Collet, I returned to the chariot. Solicitous to be the first to acquaint, or rather to break to you the sad truth, I ordered the men to drive to F——, thinking we might meet on the road; but unacquainted with the way, they took a circuit. Enough, you know the rest."

Before I could answer, Doctor Jerold entered. He was evidently much excited. Addressing us, he said:

"Gentlemen, circumstances have led to my saving Sir Freville Deerhurst's life, and treating you both with hospitality; in return, I have a request to make, one which none but ruffians would refuse."

"Speak, Doctor Jerold," Mellish replied; "and answer for myself, you shall be obeyed."

He actually clasped his hands and groaned as he called out, "It is that you both quit this neighbourhood, this country, without further delay. Not half-an-hour since, Sir Egbert Eastville rode out this house, on his way to the Terrace. Should he be there, Sir Freville, learn—and who can depend on servants?—of your visit, lost as he is, the

Mellish would have replied by the assurances ; but Jerold, who appeared attracted, called out :

“ Away ! away ! your departure is guarantee for your future good conduct

So saying, he led us down stairs, and patience, acted the footman, forcing chariot door. We entered ; he bade and in a few moments the four spanking which Mellish had so gaily boasted, and my mad vanity I expected would have been to my arms, rapidly conveyed us from of my guilty and fatal passion.

CHAPTER VI.

MY attempt to describe my unspeakable affliction for Clara must prove fruitless. Those who, death, have been torn from their best beloved, too well comprehend its extent; and to the more fortunate or less sensitive, its expression would appear as the exaggeration of fancy or of wrought sensibility; besides, mine was not a common bereavement, for independent of the final passion with which her superior love had inspired me, Clara was linked to my heart—to my memory, by all the associations of infancy, of boyhood, of departed friends. Thus when I lost her, earth seemed desolate of all comfort, and, however contradictory my subsequent conduct may appear, and however the scenes which I have to relate may seem a mockery of the sincerity of my love and grief, still they are known to be true.

On quitting Doctor Jerold's, Mellish and I proceeded to London. Arrived there, trembling

for my health, he called in Abernethy, who, perhaps from caprice had taken a fancy to me, and treated me with the greatest kindness. At first he ordered me to the country, and I removed to an elegant residence on the banks of the Thames, about nine miles from Richmond; but there I could not stay: the spring was just opening, and every bird, every flower, nay, the starry heavens and the verdure of the fields,—in short all connected with nature and nature's God, brought Clara in full force to my mind, and like one demented I fled back to town and there I rushed into dissipation—into vice; but though even frenzy could not associate the idea of her with such scenes, they failed to excite or amuse me. But it is absurd to follow up the aberrations of my despair.

After a few months I became more calm: one good sprung from the intensity of my suffering. I struggled to banish all thoughts of Clara, consequently shunned every object, every subject, connected with her memory; in this I was aided by Abernethy's advice, as well as medical assistance. Mellish, too, although his once gay spirits were quite gone, strove to cheer me, and for this purpose more than once entreated that I would see my former companion, Thomas La Franck, who was then in London, highly esteemed as a divine, and very solicitous to soothe my affliction.

religious hope. But I, somewhat haughtily, turned the very idea, for unfortunately spiritual consolation was connected in my mind with the vulgar canting of Lieutenant Dolly, who, weak and uneducated, had become a writer of penny tracts, and a chanter of canticles, the latter requiring the inspirations of Bacchus. The sanctioned manner in which this presumptuous lot, set against every other vice, while he nightly indulged in the degrading one of intoxication, was striving to

Compound for sins, he was inclin'd to,
By damning those he had no mind to,

ordered constant amusement to the mess, and apply the contempt which should have been only confined to the individual, in our unreasoning folly cast a shade of ridicule on the sacred object, so profanely treated; thus I actually lived with scorn from the thoughts of La Rochefoucauld and prayer.

While I was thus solely engrossed by my own individual sorrow, Europe was still suffering from the ravages and horrors of the Peninsular war. Smithy took advantage of this to press on me the effeminate selfishness, nay, cowardice of remaining tranquilly at home, pining after an irretrievable loss, while thousands of my compatriots were fighting for their country's glory. On this

subject Mellish, who was almost in despair, corps having been ordered to country quarters in Scotland, was still more eloquent, till rose their representations, and my own ardor after some excitement powerful enough to rise from my thoughts of Clara, which in spite of efforts to elude them, pursued me like a plague. I resolved to take some measures to be sent to Spain. It is needless to say that with my command of money, promotion was easily obtained with it and Mr. Moneymore's assistance, was quite conversant with all manner of business. He was then the most obsequious slave to my wishes. I was soon gazetted for a troop in the — Fusiliers and at the same time Mellish to another — Dragoons. From the period of Sir John's death, I had purposed purchasing his property and advancing his fortune. He received the compliment from me with expressions of heartfelt gratitude, and with that noble generosity of character which did not shrink from accepting a favor from a man whom he then esteemed, and on which had our fortunes been reversed, he would willingly have conferred the same kindness.

Shortly after obtaining his troop, Mellish joined his corps, then in Ciudad Rodrigo, when Wellington was assembling his forces; and he succeeded to Salamanca, from whence, having defeated the French, they crossed the Douro; but it

my intention to follow the army's route. From Valladolid, Mellish wrote to me, enthusiastically describing the stirring events of the campaign, and dwelling on the benefit his spirits had derived from constant employment and excitement. After this, at the memorable battle of Vittoria, he so distinguished himself as to obtain the notice and approbation of his Commander, the accounts of which reached me through the public papers, as he was far too modest to boast, even to me, of his success.

These accounts so flattering to Mellish, and the pride which I experienced at England's triumphs, roused me from the hopeless despondency into which I was so rapidly sinking; and although the leave of absence granted on account of my delicate health, wanted some three weeks of being expired, I resolved to set off immediately and join my corps which was then lying before Taragona, under the command of Lord William Bentinck.

It were at once tedious and uninteresting to enter into any detail of a war, with every circumstance of which, and their consequent results, all Europe are intimately acquainted. So passing over the unsuccessful attack upon Taragona, our retreat to Alicant, and subsequent movements, during all of which, from my military knowledge and experience, I had the good fortune to gain the approbation and confidence of Lord William

Bentinck, I shall at once come to Toulouse, at whose desperate and most sanguinary battle, the hero Wellington added another wreath to his former victories, exalting England above all European nations.

It is needless to add that the capture of Toulouse closed the campaign ; it took place on the tenth of April, and on the eleventh intelligence reached that Bonaparte was dethroned. The important news was immediately communicated to the French Generals ; but Soult, on our authority, disdaining to credit the, to him, terrible fact, at his command, the French refused to lay down their arms. This to me proved unfortunate. I had escaped unhurt from the bloody field of Toulouse ; but that evening, being engaged in a *sortie* made by the enemy, I received a severe sabre wound in my right shoulder, which, though in itself not dangerous, became serious from the loss of blood, so to escape being taken prisoner I rode back to my quarters at a furious rate. Fortunately Mellish was there before me, and to his unremitting attentions I owed my perfect recovery.

Next day the French army received indisputable accounts of the abdication of Bonaparte ; a suspension of hostilities was agreed upon, and however disappointed and discomfited, they were obliged to lay down their arms. For myself, my wound was more than compensated for by this proud triumph

to England, and by the manly and flattering kindness shown by Lord Wellington, who honoured me by his personal inquiries. Let me here remark that, owing to his recommendation, on my return to England I received the Order of the Bath.

Although my weakness continued, I was enabled to proceed by short stages to Paris, where the allies were congregated. Mellish preceded me by some days, and at my request, hired a château for my reception, for I did not feel equal to the bustle of public hotels. The one which I selected for its retirement was situated outside the Champs Elysées, at the side remotest from the city. It was of a moderate size, stood in the centre of a small court, which opened on an avenue planted on either side with chesnut trees; this led into the Champs Elysées, and by its shade rendered the place still more gloomy. There were two reception rooms: their windows reaching to the ground, opened on the court; but this offered no advantage, for it was neglected and overgrown with weeds. The servants' department was separated by a long passage from the main building, rendering attendance slow and inconvenient. Aware of these disadvantages, Mellish apologised for his selection of the château, saying that, from the great concourse of people who had flocked into Paris to witness the regality of the Count d'Artois, it was almost impossible to get a residence. I assured him, with truth,

that its profound seclusion and quiet rendered it more acceptable to me than the finest palace.

I was accompanied to Paris by my valet, Llewellyn. He was a Welchman from the neighbourhood of Cader Idris, and had been in constant employment about the Parsonage; had become attached to me, and enlisted into the — light infantry, for the express purpose of being my attendant. On my going to the West Indies, he of course remained with the regiment; but on my return to England I purchased his discharge, and hired him as valet, till provoked by his folly in boasting, at the Terrace, of my early friendship and relationship to Clara, I parted with him in displeasure, though he declared that he had only insinuated it to Nelly Dudgeon, thinking it would exalt me to have it thought that so great a person as Lady Eastville had been attached to me before her marriage with Sir Egbert.

After Sir Roger's death, moved by Llewellyn's penitence, I was once more tempted to take him into my service, and now committed to him the care of my household. In spite of every precaution, I suffered so seriously from my journey, that for ten days I was confined to the château, and my mind, which the excitement of war, for the time being, had weaned from its gloomy reflections, was again rapidly sinking into despondency. Mellish, in his watchful friendship, observed this, and on many an evening quitted the gay and crowded

of Paris to try to cheer me. At first, I was grateful for the kindness, and strove to relieve my melancholy by struggling against it; but after a few days, he mentioned that Thérèse Franck was in Paris, and in the devout pouring the balm of religious hope into my dejected spirit, was very solicitous to renew our acquaintance, I became provoked at what I termed a presumptuous interference, and my haughty irritation grew quite rude and unbecomingly so, vulgarly terming La Franck a hypocrite, and comparing him, who was a perfect gentleman, to the low-bred, canting Lieutenant

He since wondered at the mildness with which, for a long time, Mellish bore with me, and could only result from Christian patience and weakness. He said,

“Monsieur de Ville, if I appear too importunate, it is because I have received the greatest benefit from Thérèse Franck’s doctrine. You recollect that when he first presented me with my troop, my rebellious spirits were quite subdued; well, the successes and triumphs of conquest cheered me, and I was myself again, until after I was wounded in Alicant, when, owing to an adventure and appointment which even to you I cannot describe, I was almost distracted;—life became

peration similar to that I had so
demned in you, Freville, I resolved
in my self-delusion I deemed ar
death, and for this purpose rushed
of the fight, and received my
being covered with wounds and
in being promoted. The stirring
siege left little leisure for individ
still, some care was taken to pr
safety, though no hopes of my reco
tertaind. In this extremity, La Fr
in Spain, heard of my danger, and
our boyish friendship, flew to my a
by unremitting care and medical sk
some knowledge of medicine, pres
Nay, more,—in accordance with hi
sion,—he supported me under the
which before appeared insupportable

Mellish paused, for with some c
ill-placed wit, I ridiculed his lately-a

excuse his intrusion. This was beyond endurance; provoked and offended, still desirous to avoid an open quarrel, he started up, made a cold bow, and abruptly quitted the apartment. Though ashamed of my conduct, I had not magnanimity to follow and offer some excuse, but stood at the window, and, as he rode by, did not deign to return his salute.

But this vapouring insolence could not deceive myself. I felt that I had acted in a most inexcusable manner to one whose friendship I highly valued, and who, being in his own conduct incapable of rudeness, was slow to excuse it in others; but I had acquired the habit of banishing all reflection. So, in the present instance, ordering my chariot, I drove to one of the theatres, and afterwards attended a ball at the Louvre; for there were few entertainments of consequence in Paris to which I was not invited, and received with flattering attention.

CHAPTER VII.

A WEEK had passed on after I held this conversation with Mellish, and though he continued in Paris, he never came to the château. This annoyed me beyond expression; for though my table was crowded with invitations from persons of the highest rank, I was literally without a companion. The fact was, my absent and retiring manners being imputed to pride and *hauteur*, every advance I made towards intimacy was coolly received; yet, on this point, at least, I was treated with injustice, for I set no value on my possessions, so fruitless of enjoyment. My health, however, rapidly improved; and as I was ordered to be constantly in the air, I spent hours either riding or sauntering about, but nothing interested me. In vain Paris presented scenes of the most brilliant gaiety, or deepest political interest; princes, statesmen, heroes passed before me, in all the pride of their distinctive qualities, and various nations, without even ex-

ing my observation, such was the state of
athy into which I had sunk.

At this period, my wealth, by supplying all my
shes, and removing the necessity of exertion,
oved a misfortune. One of the resources of
y ennui was to throw myself into a hammock I
t slung in my room, and swing myself like a
ild, while I smoked cigars ; then I would spring
it of it, curse my own indolence, fidget about,
ke up a book, cast it aside, and stroll out to
alk on the Boulevards. There I occasionally
w Mellish and La Franck ; once or twice they
pproached, as if to address me ; but I turned
cornfully into another direction. My selfishness
nd indolence were rapidly destroying all my
obler qualities : as to my temper, it had become
evish and discontented ; and far from having
agnanimity to conquer such faults, or at least,
ontend against them, I loved to impute my mis-
rtunes and errors to others.—Sir Egbert East-
ille was a pompous, jealous tyrant ; Doctor
erold a cold, philosophic man, incapable of
owerful feelings in his own nature, and making
allowance for their influence over others ;
ellish was volatile and weak, good-natured and
uable, indeed, until he was spoiled by religion ;
d La Franck—no doubt a hypocrite. Such
s the false reasoning by which I at once ex-
ed and nourished my growing misanthropy,

whose germ was disappointed passion vanity.

One evening I returned more gloomy and sponding than ever, from my stroll on the vards; some public rejoicings had been forward, and every person, but myself, appeared cheerful and happy; yet I did not join them, on the contrary, I despised them, could be so easily amused. It chanced the air was very sultry, and as the irritation of my mind kept me in a constant fever, I threw my cravat, unbuttoned my shirt collar, and lay myself into a large chair before the casement which opened into the narrow, solitary passage. There was a profound silence, the servants were gone to witness the rejoicings; a sense of loneliness pressed on me; and, in spite of my efforts to suppress them, memories of the past stole into my soul, bringing the saddest of all convictions, that those I had most loved—and such were those who had most loved me—were now in their graves, and I was a solitary man, whom none felt an interest. It may be unmanly, but it is not less true,—I wept from a woman's weakness. From mere exhaustion I fell into a sleep, and then Clara, who, waking, did not venture to think on, haunted my imagination. At first, my dreams were troubled; but the perfume of flowers floated over me,

At I sat beside her and her father, at the age, and while she sorted flowers for a while, I placed others in a basket that Mr. M held.

He opened my eyes, and beheld a form in kneeling before me, and a half-suppressed woe on my ear; then the form rose and hovered over me, till I was perfectly conscious that a living, human being was hanging over me, with seeming tenderness. I suppressed a sigh, I did not move; it was a delirium, a sort of such exquisite rapture, that I would have prolonged it, even for a few minutes, by the sacrifice of half my wealth. There was a rustling sound, but I still remained in my listless posture, with my eyelids half closed. I know not how long I had continued in this way, when Llewellyn entered with lights, exclaiming—

Mr Freville, are you not afraid to sit exposed to cold, and the dews falling so heavy? and the air is so unwholesome as the night air."

He started up angrily, at being disturbed; on my saying so, something fell to the ground; stooping to pick it up, I found a bouquet of rare flowers, tied with blue ribbons.

"Ah! Llewellyn," I cried, "how came this

He professed his ignorance; had only just picked it up.

"It is very strange," I said, "could any person have thrown them in by the casement?"

"By no means," he answered, "for as I entered, I observed them carefully placed in your bosom, within the folds of your shirt, and supposed you had brought them from the Boulevards, where, Sir Freville, I saw you walking this evening. Had I been aware of your return, of course I should not have presumed to stay out so late."

"I cannot account for these flowers," I said, mournfully, and replacing them in my bosom.

"It was some noble lady, no doubt," he answered, "for as I approached here, I saw one wrapped in a mantilla, in the Spanish style, enter a carriage, which waited at a short distance from this, beyond the grove of chesnuts."

Dismissing Llewellyn, I again drew forth the flowers, and examined them attentively. There were some fine carnations, white, blotched with scarlet—such had been the most admired and prized by Clara: then the blue ribbon, with which the bouquet was tied, had been her favourite colour—indeed, the only one I had ever seen her wear. My heart palpitated, as I made these observations, and fancies, so strange and wild, that they must have originated in a disturbed imagination, flitted before me. But why attempt to trace thought to its source?—while my heart

admitted the improbable, but rapturous belief, that Clara still lived, far from repulsing the idea, I persuaded myself that the report of her death had been fabricated to check my presumptuous love.

"Yes," I exclaimed, "when Doctor Jerold received my letter—by whatever chance it fell into his hands—provoked at my perseverance, and, perhaps, fearing that I might yet succeed with Clara, he, no doubt, abetted by the Dowager Lady Eastville, and, perhaps, by dear Clara herself, planned this horrible scheme of deception to banish me from her. Else, why his anxiety to hurry me from the neighbourhood of the Terrace? Were my beloved one no more, what mattered it how long I remained?—I could neither molest or seduce her. Then, Mellish's eternal teasing to get me from England, and stimulate me to join the war, under the guise of friendship—to act such a perfidious part!—well might he lose his once cheerful spirits, and grow dejected; but he has found a salve for all his treachery in religion," and I gave a bitter laugh.

Having thus satisfied myself that Clara still lived, with equal sophistry I accounted for her visit to me on the preceding evening; for I no longer doubted her identity. By supposing that Sir Egbert was dead, and that she, hearing of my gallantry at Toulouse, my wounds, and my hav-

ing accompanied the Allies to Paris—for the daily papers were replete with the intelligence—had flown on the wings of love; but from the delicacy and reserve of her character, had chosen that nocturnal and mysterious way of visiting me. It was a flattering romance, perfectly consonant to my vain and imaginative despotism.

Next morning I wrote to Mellish, saying I had something of importance to communicate, and requesting that he would call upon me as soon as possible. The answer was, that he had left Paris for some days. Resolved on obliging him to acknowledge that Clara lived—a fact I no longer doubted,—I sprang on my horse, with the intention of following him; but on arriving at the hotel where he had apartments, I found they were ignorant of his route, or when he was likely to return. This postponement to my wishes, was a severe disappointment.

In the evening, I strolled to the Boulevards, staring at every woman of a noble figure, more particularly if she was veiled; but no one like Clara met my view. Then I returned home, and, spite of Llewellyn's remonstrances on the danger, remained near the lattice till morning; but no mysterious stranger entered. However, I was completely roused from my apathetic indifference, and wandered about like a troubled spirit, sometimes riding to the Champs-Élysées, sometimes

hovering about the Louvre, or Père-la-Chaise, in short, every place strangers were likely to visit. Thus ten days passed on, my health suffered from the cold and restlessness of my nights, all spent before the open lattice ; and with profound melancholy, I began to think that the fair form which had visited me was, spite of the flowers, but an illusion of my fancy.

"This night," I exclaimed, as I flung myself in the *fauteuil*, "is the last I shall devote to this hopeless watch!" indeed, so cold and hopeless, that, to satisfy Llewellyn, I rolled myself in a furred mantle, and soon sunk into a restless slumber.

It must have lasted some hours, for the lamps in my apartment burned dimly, and the pale grey tints of early morning already were appearing, as I was awakened by hearing a deep sigh, and a soft delicious breath passed over my face, and a voice so low as to be scarcely distinct, muttered, "Dear Freville."

Angels of mercy ! that one moment of uncontrollable joy seemed a rich recompense for all of past sorrow. Its excess nearly destroyed me. Clara hung over me in all the tenderness of a fond woman's love, and yet I was faint, powerless. Again lips rested on my forehead ; again, "Dear Freville," was murmured forth, and the form was moving off. This roused my energies ; I uttered

a cry, and casting my arms about it, with convulsive eagerness exclaimed :

“Clara, my ever-loved, my never-to-be forgotten, blessings, eternal blessings be poured on you for this kindness.” There was a struggle to escape from my embrace, then a low hysteric laugh, then the head fell languidly on my bosom, and I felt warm tears gush over it.

Without loosening my hold I sunk on one knee, in a hoarse voice exclaiming : “Angel of light, of love ! Idol of my soul’s devotion ! weep not thus, but speak to me. Oh ! in this hour of our ecstatic meeting, when from the cold precincts of the grave you are restored to my hopes, to a love which can never know diminution, let all past sorrows be forgotten. Oh ! Clara, could you but comprehend with what a depth of suffering I heard of your death, you could then appreciate my present rapture ; and if I survived the horrible report, it was because some doubts had been instilled into my mind that you did not return my passion. Then, idol of my soul, speak one word still further to reassure—to bless me !”

Again there was an effort to escape, and I distinctly heard a convulsive sigh ; after a time a gentle, sad voice, said : “Alas ! Freville, by that single word I must destroy the illusion of your happiness. I am not the Clara so passionately loved,—so sincerely regretted.”

Not when I heard the awful words, Clara, Sirbert's wife, is dead, did a sense of more bitter sorrow or disappointment overwhelm my soul. A sensation of madness shot through my brain; and a hideous yell I cast off the gentle being I rested on my bosom, and with the fury of a demon dashed myself on the ground, striking my head with my clenched hands.

Oh! Freville, in pity sake," cried Aigline—it was that beautiful, unfortunate being—he knelt before me, "calm these frightful passions. Oh! that my folly had not led me to agonize you, and so deeply mortify myself. Have mercy, Freville, and for my sake, I ran every risk to visit you, conquer this passion. By what strange deception you could I was Clara, I know not." She rose, and crossing her arms across her bosom, in a proud, commanding tone, added: "Hearing that she was I thought Aigline Tennant might be remembered. Freville, we have been both deceived, the delusion is fled. Farewell, we shall meet no more." So saying she sprang through the door, and disappeared.

When Llewellyn entered my apartment he found me lying on the ground, and for some days so ill as to alarm the poor fellow, who was very attached to me. I was still confined to my room when Mellish arrived. On finding me

I answered : " Mellish, before I can
any request of yours, I must explain th
a strong suspicion there has been some
practised on me relative to Lady
death. From the beginning I percei
mystery was observed on the subject, b
terly no doubts arose in my mind. La
solemnly entreat of you to acknowledge
If you have been led to deceive me, I
forgiveness, and, by a present confessio
ever command my friendship, which,
dying, I shall fully prove."

He stared at me with surprise, then
I was delirious, strove to sooth me, an
me to lie down. I convinced him t
perfectly sane ; he looked troubled, and
would explain what had led to such
supposition.

Of course my answers were ambiguous
satisfy me he raised his sword to his

For some time I conversed on the subject, though Mellish strove to change it, by pressing to see a physician and La Franck. I declined this; but this time did so politely, and we parted without any allusion to Aigline. Aware how much he had loved her, I was loathe to wound his feelings by a description of her visit.

All hopes of Clara again crushed, as my health turned my thoughts dwelt on Aigline, on her duty, and impassioned tenderness, and bitterly regretted the repulse my disappointed fancy given to her. Once more I watched at the door, but she came not; and as I had no clue of covering where she was, except through Mellish, who seemed to know every person in Paris, I resolved to question him on the subject, consequently wrote to request he would spend the evening with me. He kindly came, and seemed pleased at finding me in better spirits.

As we sat over our wine I said, carelessly: "By the by, Mellish, I could have sworn I saw Aigline Tennant the other evening; is this another of my wild fancies, or is she in Paris?"

He grew very pale, then flushed, and in an excited voice said: "Freville, let us not speak of this. You enjoyed my confidence, and knew that was my first, indeed, only love. It is a weakness, nay, a crime, to retain any tender-

ness for a woman so lost to every better feeling; still I cannot wholly conquer it."

"All this is very fine, Mellish," I replied; playfully, "but no answer to my question. I wish to know, is Aigline in Paris?"

"It matters not where she is," he replied petulantly. "Freville Deerhurst, do not suppose I care for the wanton; I must be a fool to do so. But when I think of George Tennant, her noble-minded brother, and the disgrace she has cast on him, and on her father's memory, and of her poor mother's anxious tenderness, by heaven! it drives me almost to madness;" and he paced up and down the room.

I saw how much he suffered, and for a moment hesitated to press him on; but selfishness conquered. So I actually teased him till he resumed his seat, and gave me the following account:

"Freville, when you received Mr Minister's letter in Chatham, we both concluded that Aigline was living with him in the islands. It was not so. On her father's death, collecting the little property he had left, she retired to some humble spot in the neighbourhood of London, resolving never again to return to Glenlow Castle. Of her subsequent conduct for some time I do not exactly know the particulars; but I have reason to suppose that she formed a criminal and unfortunate attachment, and with one worthy of her hesi-

fections. Be that as it may, while in Alicant, having one night gone out to meet some friends, by a strange chance I met Aigline. It is needless to dwell on my raptures at again meeting her, though they were soon checked by finding that she was placed under circumstances of the most deject sorrow, poverty, and disgrace. Fortunately, I thought, it was in my power to render her some services. Oh, God! how willingly I granted them. Again thrown into her fascinating society, my boyish passion revived. I felt my danger, and shrank from the temptation; for, even had old Mc Mistrion been dead, and I possessed of the means to marry, I could not unite my fate to one, however lovely, who had brought disgrace on herself; but I judged rightly, for her subsequent conduct proved her lost to every better, every holier thing." As he spoke he pressed his hand to his forehead, evidently struggling with powerful emotions.

"Most virtuous youth," I remarked, sarcastically, "was La Franck your Mentor on the occasion; and did this Circe try to detain you?" He turned fiercely on me as he answered: "Sir Wille, on that occasion I required no Mentor. I must have been a villain, the worst of villains, had I have still further degraded George Anant's sister; methinks it is impossible that either you or I can ever forget the happy days spent at Glanmire. Alas! that I should have

forget your Irish habit of never giving answer to a question, and say is Aigline in Paris ?”

“ Yes, Freville, and you will be shocked under the protection of Lord Beletrieve.”

“ Then, Mellish, you need not have been so scrupulous ; perhaps, had you remained her, and acted a brother’s, as you would lover’s part, she might have escaped the eternal disgrace of living with the gallant persevering peer. For to my certain knowledge she always hated and loathed him, or professed to do so, for I admit it is not possible to penetrate a woman’s thoughts.”

He answered somewhat sternly : “ I could not have believed that you would sympathize with poor Aigline’s misfortunes and guilt with composure, or exercise your sarcasm against her still in some respect your observation is correct. I should not have fled to avoid myself from

would prove her ruin has, it seems, come to pass ; but you appeared so triste, I wished to cheer you ; and now let me remark, as you found her in poverty, may not distress have pressed her on to the horrible necessity of taking this untoward step, and of doing what we so much lament. Believe me, there must be something that affects not our view in the business ; for though volatile, Aigline was proud and fastidious to a degree ; then she was sensitive and romantic, and except from some imperative necessity would never have consented to such an ignominious measure ; nay, would scarcely have consented to become his wife. In short, the more I reflect on her conduct, the more unaccountable it appears."

"Except," said Mellish in a choking voice, "that she positively held the same position with another, and according to the old saying, 'Once a woman makes a slip, she goes rolling down—'" " 'Till she goes to the devil,'" I interrupted with a forced laugh.

Again he turned furiously on me, as he exclaimed : "Sir Freville, how came you and I ever to be friends ? I hope not from any reciprocity of character." I made no reply, and he continued more vehemently, "Unfortunately I am under pecuniary obligations to you ;—it is a bitter section."

Ashamed of having provoked him by a levity merely assumed to disguise the deep interest I took in Aigline, I rose, and taking his unwilling hand, said with vivacity: "My dear Mellish, I have no hesitation in asking your pardon, for anything I may have said to offend. I am aware that my manner latterly is caustic and disagreeable, but to you never intentionally. So say you forgive me."

"Most readily," he replied with a burst of honest feeling. Thus I pledge you," he cried; filling out a bumper of claret, he poured out one for me; and after a time I renewed our subject, by again observing:

"May not Aigline, as I have said, been compelled by distress to live with Lord Beletrieve."

"I wish I could plead that excuse for her," he answered; "but I never let her want. Amidst all her faults, she retained in her character, her father's noble generosity; consequently to reconcile her to accept of my gifts, I never let her suspect my want of money; besides at the period I was fully supplied."

"Let me inquire, Mellish, how you came to be so flush of cash?" I interrupted.

"Freville, that question from you is absurd—When first I met Aigline I had not a guinea; but I drew in advance on my paymaster, besides which he lent me some hundreds. It was a weakness,

could not endure to see her suffer any, above all, when I recollected her liberal hospitality to me and my mother, this means I soon got so involved, that the large sum you forwarded me to had been compelled to dispose of my life of the disgrace of quitting the army midst of the war, the idea was so torturing that I could not have survived it."

"Oh, to what money do you allude? I forwarded you one shilling, although had I been aware of your embarrassment I should have done so without hesitation, and thought Sir James were never more honourably dis-

"Some points," he answered, "you, Freville, possess more refinement of feeling than any I ever met; but mysterious as was the gift which you forwarded your anonymous gift, not for a moment did I doubt when they came; and now, Freville, let me tell you will add to the obligations you have already heaped on me, by never again alluding to Aigline. I would, if possible, forget the offence of one whose shame has cast a shadow over my happiness; also, Deerhurst, bear in mind that between gentlemen the one who solicits pecuniary favour on the other, should be regarded of giving offence. For the pre-

sent, I must bid you adieu, as I have some tary duties to attend."

He rung for his horse; I accompanied him to the outer gate, and as he mounted, said: "I wish, we must have a talk over this money business, I solemnly assure you it was not I will do it." He smiled incredulously, shook his head, and springing on his charger galloped off. I was resolved on seeking an immediate interview with Aigline, I hurried into Paris to gain the necessary information.

I entered a *café* much frequented by the literary; seating myself by a table, I ordered refreshments and began to converse with some of the company. They cheerfully met my advances. Among the things we spoke of music, and as the conversation increased, to win on their confidence, I sang some of my best songs: they were loudly applauded and encored. This, as I expected, I put off all reserve; after a time with affected reserve I observed, that I understood the beautiful woman in Paris, was residing with Lord Beletrieve. Then, indeed, there was no more talk, of scandal, and of foolery; changed to my principles, a shudder passed over me. I heard Aigline associated with gross and vulgar names. However, my object was gained; I ascertained that Lord Beletrieve resided within the immediate neighbourhood of the Louvre.

appeared he had long known Louis XVIII, and was on intimate terms with him. My informant, Colonel Weston, who seemed to be intimately acquainted with Lord Beletrieve's character spoke of him and his Cosmopolite principles with contempt; and in a humorous manner mentioned, that spite of the affected indifference, which an obedience prescribed by the rules of the order to which he had so many years belonged, enforced upon him, he was in reality not the callous scoundrel he pretended to be. The Colonel told me, that of all his passions—and his passions, strange to say, by those who were best acquainted with him, were known to be strong—his jealousy was understood to be the strongest. This elucidation of a character, hitherto deemed inscrutable, I confess, surprised me. I acknowledged as much; but the Colonel smiled at my inexperience.

"In short, Sir Freville," he concluded, "crowded as is Paris, Lord Beletrieve and the lady have become objects of general curiosity."

I was inclined to doubt this account of Lord Beletrieve's jealousy, so unlike his usual cold, contemptuous bearing; but when I recollected how well he knew what Aigline had been, nay, was—how infinitely beyond his former conception of her value, I began to think it less surprising. Resolving to pursue my inquiries, I said: Colonel Weston, may I ask does this fair frailty

revenge herself for his tyranny by other lovers?"

He replied, "On the contrary, I understand she is as modest and retiring as if she were a nun. Certainly there is no accounting for the whims of a woman's fancy, when one so beautiful and accomplished as this young lady is required to devote herself solely to him."

I smiled, and after some more conversation, I quitted the *café*, resolved to reconnoitre the place where Aigline resided "in due season." With this very polite and paltry pretext, I rapidly passing the Louvre, I soon reached the Beletrieve Hotel: it was a large house facing the street. For some time, I paced up and down before it, at the windows in the vain hope of Aigline appearing at them; far from it, his Lordship chanced to be within, observed my徘徊, once recognised me, and no doubt divined my purpose, instantly hurried out, and came towards me with his usual courtesy, more animation than I had ever seen him display in my hand, exclaiming: "Mr. Deerhurst, a most agreeable surprise; but I forgive you no longer the gay young ensign I address you as—wealthy baronet—a major too, (I have voted for my majority). Now amidst your acquisitions, what am I to call you?"

Not a little confounded at his having seen me, and at the sneering expression of his countenance, which so ill accorded with his playful words, I hesitated what to say ; but after a moment recovering myself, I replied : " In the pleasure of seeing your Lordship and renewing our acquaintance, I care not by what title I am addressed."

" Well said, my young gallant," he cried in a sarcastic tone : " I guessed, when you observed my hotel so closely you wished to enter, no doubt to renew old acquaintance. However, Sir Freville, my present domicile is a shabby concern, and as my pride has survived my wealth, I never invite any one into it." He gave his sickly forced smile ; but spite of his cosmopolite philosophy a sigh burst forth, and for some moments, still moving onward in the direction of the palace of the Louvre, he remained silent.

I followed, slowly marking the alterations in his appearance since we had last met ; his figure was greatly attenuated, his lameness quite confirmed, and to the usual wan and sneering expression of his countenance, was now added a profound sadness ; in fact, the very concentration of selfishness which had indurated his heart to the disappointments and woes of others, made him feel his own fallen state more sensibly. With the Prince's favour, the fabric of fashion on which he had founded his fantastic pretensions vanished, and

one by one his whole set deserted from *him* while the *danseuse-de-corde* for whom, under *the* influence of some undefinable sentiment, he *had* sacrificed so much, impatient of the restraints under which he placed her, fled back to her former companions.

After walking for some time, Lord Beltrive, pointing to a seat, said :—

“ Shall we rest here ? ”

I obeyed ; he viewed me with attention, and, then in a graceful manner, but again sighing, added :—

“ Where, Sir Freville Deerhurst, shall I begin my congratulations on the torrent of good fortune which encompasses you ? You have succeeded to Sir Roger’s wealth and title ; then you are already celebrated for your prowess in battle. I assure you but yesterday at a military re-union I heard Lord Wellington make honourable mention of your name.”

I blushed scarlet with pleasure at such a compliment. Not noticing, he proceeded :—

“ Now, though my taste never consisted in warfare, I can well imagine its excitement, consequently pleasure. May I inquire whether, amidst these elevations, you have had leisure to renew your flirtation with the Miss Vilmonts ? Which is to be the chosen one, or (he playfully added) do you adhere to your former intent of intro-

ducing a Bill into Parliament to prove the propriety and moral advantages likely to arise from your marrying the three sisters: another circumstance upon which I could hardly congratulate you. Consequently, I shall not envy you; indeed, I much doubt whether success there will be rewarded, even by transient pleasure," and he gave his sickly smile, and inimitable shrug.

I tried to answer in a playful manner, observing, "I must not claim the original suggestion of the Bill; it was Miss . . ." ere I could add, Tennant; —he resolved to avoid her name, and in his abrupt manner said:—

"All this time, Sir Freville, you have never made one inquiry relative to myself; not even to ask why, in defiance of my general system, I have rushed into Paris with its myriads of sight-hunters. Verily, you soldiers, in the dire work of vengeance and death, neglect the *politesse* of society."

Though I saw through his *ruse*, I had no alternative. Being aware that he would play off every attempt I made to touch on any subject of which he did not approve, I answered:—"Your Lordship must excuse my apparent neglect, and oblige me by saying what was your inducement to follow the many?"

He replied with mock solemnity:—

"What came I here for to see? Lo! a King clad in regal vestments."

"True, my Lord," I answered; "I understand you and Louis XVIII. are great friends."

"Friends," he scornfully reiterated; "bah! but, Sir Freville, you are a youth, the hero of two battles, and no doubt of half-a-dozen love adventures, consequently, entitled to romance; but the idea of Louis XVIII. of France and Lord Beletrieve being friends, is a stride beyond the romantic, and reaches to the burlesque."

I stammered out: "I heard, that when he was in England, you had conferred some favours on him."

"No such thing; but, even if I had, the proud, though persecuted descendant of the Bourbons, would have received them as a right; and, as to a Frenchman loving one of our nation, it would be outraging nature; and credit me, Sir Freville, when we are obliged, by some imperative necessity, to receive favours from those we consider our inferiours, in the mortification of our self-love we seldom feel gratitude."

"You must not expect me, Lord Beletrieve," I coolly answered, "to adopt your views on this subject. It would speak little for human nature."

"Of which, in your self-devotion, you wish to think well. So be it. You, Sir Freville, are in your zenith, I in my decline, consequently view objects in a different light; and, as to your adopting my opinions, it would not answer; for, rapidly

am fading away, I am likely to survive the
tion of my thoughts. Nay, gentle youth, look
so surprised at the expression, for, in every
; under every form of government, or prayer,
tion is the presiding genius, before whose
ricious will we all prostrate;" he gave his
rnful shrug as he added, "acknowledge, Sir
eville, is it not the only excuse for the fantastic
lies of which, with all our boasted intellect, we
guilty?"

There was a something in the countenance and
mner of Lord Beletrieve when he indulged in
caustic misanthropy, which always chilled and
ressed me. To change the subject I now again
nanded what had brought him to Paris.

He answered :—"The most extraordinary event
t ever occurred ; and, though no soothsayer, I
dict that ever will occur. Bonaparte, the
v of a hundred battles, is dethroned, and
his XVIII., with a crown on his head, fills his
one, and is guarded by the Allies' triple-edged
rd. It is passing strange ; therefore, came I
itness it."

All as it should be," I replied, with vivacity.
e usurper is banished, and the hereditary heir
the throne, from which his noble and ancient
were only driven by rebellion and violence."

Well said, my gay and gallant soldier ; but,
k me, when you enter the *cafés*, keep these

Anglicised sentiments to yourself. Remember, the French hate us. I, for one, should despise them, if they did not. And now, Sir Freville, a word, ere we part. I ask not what brought you to Paris, for I guess your reply, and penetrate your motive; forsooth, even to attend to your wound you could not refrain from coming to witness England's triumph—bah! so much for your answer; and for your object, it is a useless pursuit. Now I bid you good evening. It is pleasant when people perfectly understand each other: they are not likely to seek intimacies which might lead to mistakes, quarrels, and all manner of disagreement. So, farewell, Sir Freville."

He rose from his seat, casting on me a look of unutterable hatred. I politely bade him good evening, and then walked off, without—even independent of Aigline—the slightest wish to renew our acquaintance; for, through the ambiguity of his manner, I perceived, that, like many men of desperate fortunes, he, so long the companion and flatterer of princes, had turned revolutionist;—also, that, in spite of his high bearing, he was jealous of the good fortune which, since our first meeting, had raised me above his patronage; and, if any thing was necessary to increase my anxious wish to see Aigline, it was the desire of still further mortifying him. Certainly, at that period in lieu of my long-engrossing love for Clara, I ad-

d the influence of the most contemptible
ses.

cluding that Lord Beletrieve would keep a
look out, I resolved not again to approach
otel, lest he might take some measures to
re Aigline from Paris. I well knew, from
igh spirit and determination, that, if she
to offer opposition, he would find her un-
earable ; on the other hand, his suspicions
d, there was no time to be lost, so, after
ing a hundred different plans in my mind, I
nined on confiding a letter for Aigline to
llyn, and, as he was a shrewd faithful fellow,
much attached to my interest, hoped he
find an opportunity of having it delivered.
dingly I summoned him, and, without allud-
past events, merely said that I had dis-
ed that the fair incognita who had brought
e flowers was residing at Lord Beletrieve's
that she and I had been old friends, and
was solicitous to have a letter privately
yed to her. But his Lordship being very
s in his temper, guarded her so closely, I
it would be next to impossible. I then re-
ted the necessity of observing a profound
y on the subject.

wellyn listened most attentively, and ap-
l delighted at the thought of being included
adventure. With a knowing leer, he assured

me that it was not the first time he had been an active agent in an adventure. I started, but my fastidiousness was out of place; for, encouraged by my confidence, he related to me several anecdotes, proving his own expertness as a Mercury. He concluded by saying that gold was a key to every door, and that by a happy chance he knew Lord Beletrieve's valet, who loved a glass, consequently could be easily won over to our interest.

It was then agreed that my name should not appear in the business; and, in the event of Llewellyn's negotiations being discovered, to shake all suspicion, he was to retire to a lodging in Paris, and affect to have quitted my service. Such were the mean subterfuges and alliances to which, in the pursuit of a criminal object, my proud spirit descended.

It is unnecessary to enter into a detail of all the petty scheming of Llewellyn to win over Lord Beletrieve's valet; and, when he at length succeeded in having my letters conveyed to Aigline, his boasting and egotism were so intolerable, that I regretted having ever employed him, more especially as she returned my letter under cover, merely writing these few words :

"Freville, painfully convinced of your indifference, I lay no stress on professions written under

the influence of regret for the unmanly violence with which you received me. Aware of my own degradation, I grant forgiveness; but all future acquaintance between us is at an end. Persist not, then, in your addresses, which only increase my mortification. Should you write again, ungracious as it may appear, I shall return your letters unopened. Freville, farewell.

“AIGLINE.”

This opposition and indifference on her side, gave a fresh impetus to my feelings. Again and again I wrote, but my letters were returned unopened. Still worse, Llewellyn learned that Lord Beletrieve was about returning to England, and arrangements for his departure were already in preparation. What was to be done? I offered hundreds to Llewellyn if he succeeded in gaining me an interview with her; he took a hundred guineas, saying they were sufficient. It is quite surprising to what a state of excitement I had brought up my feelings; positively, for two days I was in such a fever of anxiety that I could neither eat nor sleep. The third evening since Llewellyn had taken the money came, and he had not appeared: I was uneasy. Had he betrayed me, and embezzled the hundred guineas?—They were of no consequence, but the deception was terrible. I strode through the little patch of pleasure-ground attached to the château, then into

the narrow court ; for I feared to quit the place, lest he might return. At length, in despair, I resolved once more to visit the *café*, and seek for information. Just as I was setting off, Llewellyn arrived, and in joyous accents exclaimed,

“ Well, master, though I have kept you waiting, this time I am not without my errand. Lord Beletrieve has just gone to the Louvre, to take leave of some of the foreign princes, who set off from Paris to-morrow. His Lordship was so proud of the invitation to sup with the fine folk, he could not resist accepting of it, though for the last week he has been on the watch, as he has some suspicion of foul play ; and his valet says, his temper is so jealous, that when his shadow hits across the lady it makes him uneasy. Only think, master, of a man being jealous of his shadow, a part of himself ; is it not droll ? ”

“ Stop this nonsense,” I cried angrily, “ and say, have I any chance of seeing the lady ? ”

“ Chance, master ! why it is a certainty. For what else did you give your hundred guineas ? Nothing like money for expediting business ; so, having a plenty, I hired a carriage, and, if it is your pleasure, you have only just to jump into it, and whisk off to the Beletrieve Hotel.”

“ What then ? ” I demanded.

With a knowing grin, he said,

“ Why, your honour, you will of course be shown up to the saloon where the lady sits.”

"Is the lady apprised of my intention?" I said.

"Not a word of it," he answered. "Surely, Sir Freville, as you were old friends, it will be only an agreeable surprise to her to see you. And then the valet says, she and his Lordship fight like cat and dog, and she perfectly hates him."

Again a pang shot through my heart at hearing Aigline thus spoken of; but it checked me not, so wrapping myself up in a coachman's great coat and slouched hat, accompanied by Llewellyn, I drove within view of Lord Beletrieve's. Having alighted, and ordering the carriage to wait, I stepped boldly up to the front door, where a person, who I concluded was the obsequious valet, waited to receive me. I slipped a well-filled purse into his hand: he made quite a respectful bow, and without speaking led me up a staircase, down a long corridor, and pointing a half opened door, through which a gleam of light streamed, said in French, that bespoke him Parisian:

"The lady is there; if she is to escape with you, you must be quick, his Lordship seldom stays late hours. At all events, Monsieur, within three hours at the utmost, you must depart on this."

I promised, dismissed him, and the next moment found myself alone with Aigline.

As, except to the parties concerned, love scenes appear absurd and uninteresting I shall not enter into a description of mine with Aigline. At first she received me angrily, haughtily, accusing me of rudeness and ingratitude, and reproaching me for want of tenderness; ultimately she listened to my solemn protestation, that from the period I lost Clara, she had been the dearest object of my affections. Then came an acknowledgment of her joy when she learned I was in Paris, her anxiety to see me—her fears and doubts of her reception—the opportunities she found of paying her nocturnal visits to me, and her disappointment at awakening my despair, instead of my regard.

To all this I poured forth soft and flattering words, dwelling on the happiness we had enjoyed together in London. I then mentioned my interview with Lord Beletrieve, and belief that he had become a revolutionist. This led to a long conversation respecting him, and she solemnly assured me, that circumstances of the most painful nature, but such as she could not explain, had alone compelled her to reside under his roof; and that the very necessity had increased her abhorrence, which was augmented by the annoyances to which she was daily exposed. This acknowledgment of her sentiments and unhappiness afforded an opportunity to press my suit. Let me do the unfortunate Aigline justice; though persuaded, she was

so agitated, that she fainted away ; at the instant, the valet tapped at the door ; I opened it and requested he would bring some essences. She soon revived, and offering no further opposition, we supported her between us to the carriage. Thus I conveyed to my house the daughter of him who, in extremity, had proved my best friend : and who, in the confidence of a noble nature, had obtained my solemn promise to guard over her honour with a brother's tenderness and care.

How Lord Beletrieve bore her loss I could not ascertain ; as a few days after, while, no doubt, planning to be revenged, he was obliged to abscond from Paris, in consequence of some money transaction, with the particulars of which I also remained ignorant. These facts Llewellyn learned at his hotel, where I sent him to demand Aigline's luggage, as, far from wishing to deceive his Lordship, I rather gloried in having outwitted him. It also appeared that he had dismissed his valet, and broke up his establishment ; having no intention, he said, of again returning to France. Some reported that he was going to St. Petersburg, but the general belief was, that he had only retired to some part of England ; however, it was my opinion that he would proceed to Russia.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was a strange combination of events which had connected Aigline and me together. On either side, there was little genuine love, and no expectation of happiness. She had sought me from the memory of past tenderness, and a wish to escape from the tyranny of Lord Beltrive; and I had wooed her as a relief from an ~~enmi~~ so absorbing, that it was actually paralyzing my being. Thus the strongest links of sympathy existing between us, were a reckless indifference to all moral principles, an ardent desire to please each other, and under the assumption of a false gaiety, a strenuous endeavour to disguise the devouring grief which preyed on our hearts. Daily I laid before her all the offerings which love could devise, or wealth purchase. She received them gratefully, praised my selection, ornamented herself with the brilliant gems, and gracefully arranged in her apartments the various toys; and to reward me, touched the harp with a syren's skill, accom-

ing it with a voice of perfect harmony. But as seeming show ; in truth, she was exquisitely noble.

Out of this beautiful creature, I wished to attract an admiring crowd about her ; but with all recklessness, while Mellish continued in Paris, I added to do so. The words he had used during our last interview, when speaking of Aigline, still lived on my memory : " I must have been a villain, the worst of villains," he said, " could I still further degraded George Tennant's name." With less temptation, I had acted that day and I shrank from the withering contempt which, when it came to his knowledge, he would treat me. Not that I any longer valued friendship ; on the contrary, humbled by an acute consciousness of my own inferiority in every respect, I hated, because I could not despise

Week after week rolled on. Aigline and I being confined solely to ourselves, as the novelty of our meeting passed away, became less guarded and assiduous in our manners, till by imperceptible degrees, all reserve wore off, and our natural graces shone forth. At times she was gay to excess : dancing, singing, reciting, and amusing me with a variety of talent and anecdote ; then she would sink into the most gloomy despondency ; and when I reproached her for depressing me by her melancholy,

she would struggle to regain her cheerfulness, ~~and~~ as I discovered, have recourse to laudanum. ~~So~~ ^{So} ~~cerely~~ ^{cerely} attached to her, this grieved me beyond measure ; still I hesitated to betray my knowledge of the destructive habit. At length, in expectation of persuading her against it, I expressed ~~my~~ ^{my} disapprobation, explaining the ruinous results ~~to~~ ^{to} which the indulgence must inevitably lead. She ~~received~~ ^{received} my advice petulantly, accusing me of acting over her as a spy ; then, seeing my brow flash with anger, she tried in a playful, witty manner, to ~~up~~ ^{up} hold the practice ; and when I reasoned against it, taking my hand, in piteous accents she said :

“ Oh ! Freville, could you but comprehend ~~the~~ ^{the} excess of my agony when thoughts of the ~~past~~ ^{past} the present, or the future press on my brain, you would not wonder at my adopting any means ~~to~~ ^{to} suppress them, even for an instant.”

Perhaps in my over-zeal I treated her too harshly on this head ; for, as I afterwards found, she began to fear me. Experiencing the liveliest curiosity to learn the particulars of her union and subsequent adventures, more particularly the circumstances attending her meeting with Mellish in Alicant, I constantly introduced the subject, but she always evaded every reference to her life subsequent to her father's death. However, she had no hesitation in speaking of Mc Misserton, and one evening, being particularly cheerful, she gave me the following account of her nuptials, saying :

"I always call it the comic scene, or rather farce of my life; it was a most ridiculous business. Freville, you already know that we left London in consequence of my dear father's involvements; well, even his generous nature could not resist the indurating effects of gambling. The romance and poetry of his mind were fled, and he incessantly represented to me the absolute necessity of establishing myself by a wealthy marriage.

While half starving in the bonny land of cakes, we became acquainted with General Mc Misserton, then in his seventy-third year; and he, good man, was so charmed by my style of singing old Scotch ditties, and my knowledge of his country's chivalry, that at the end of three weeks he proposed for me to my father, and I accepted the proposal."

"Good heaven! Aigline," I cried, "how could you, young, beautiful, and accomplished, so sacrifice yourself?"

"What could I do?" she replied hastily. "My character was injured by the false reports of that wretch, Beletrieve;—I was an embarrassment to my unfortunate father; more influential than either, I had made the notable discovery, that unaccompanied by wealth or station, beauty or talent were of no avail; fashion, indeed, was a substitute for their intrinsic advantages; but alas! its vain glory had departed from me." I smiled at

her sarcasm, and she continued : " Why did I marry the Mc Misserton ? because even for a moment I never reflected on the ties or duties of the holy state into which I was entering. In my scheme of pleasure I certainly considered the old man a sad incumbrance, but one easily set aside. As he himself eloquently expressed it, he was a stout old Highlander, who loved the sports of the field as well as ever ; and who, after visiting many a sunny and fertile clime, had, like Frankland's Greenlander, returned to give a preference to the cold and barren hills of his native land. Then he was eternally lauding his sister, Miss Rachel, a steady, sandy-haired spinster, who for forty years had ruled over his establishment with such watchful economy, that she had increased his inheritance of four thousand a year to five. I could well believe the wide extent of country over which he lorded, when he possessed such an income in the north of Sutherland.

" Having learned these particulars, I mentally arranged everything to my satisfaction. The General, spite of his folly in marrying me, appeared a sensible person ; and, no doubt, as the novelty of his position wore off, ashamed of having chosen so youthful a bride, would be anxious to leave Edinburgh, where our ill-assorted nuptials had taken place, and return to his castle ; and then Miss Rachel should have my full consent to

her control over the barefooted and damsels and kilted youths, who, I undermined the household; for the Mc Misserton boasted that, as far as possible, he retained traits of his chivalrous ancestors. Good how an acquaintance with them destroyed illusions and grandeur my imagination over the memories of by-gone days!

General and Miss Rachel retained former by not I? So I concluded on re-purchase my father's elegant residence—fortunately sale—hiring a box at the Opera, and the season in London, and my summer on the continent. On Christmas plans I could decide till I saw how far Glenlow Castle was suited for company. One thing was in its favour: it was surrounded by a fine sporting park and there was good fishing. As to the considerations of equipages, furniture, *bijoux*—all were all to be in the best style—without pomp or show. I prided myself that my naturally good taste had been improved by my travels: and, though I hated the man, I also admired the Mc Misserton had an abundance of money; so there was nothing to interfere with my wishes. It was a bright phantom to veil reality! Yet, though full of a weak vanity, I had no sin in my thoughts. On the contrary, I resolved to be grave in my manner, and

correct to prudence in my conduct; and it ~~was~~ my intention to press my father to reside ~~wit~~ me during the General's absence, for I ~~neither~~ expected or wished him to remain in London.

"You laugh, Freville, at my so totally ~~setting~~ him aside: to say truth, I must have been ~~either~~ mad or a fool to have so mistaken my man; and yet it was not so extraordinary as in the ~~reputi~~tion it appears, for, from the day our union ~~wa~~ fixed, I constantly spoke of my intentions, of course qualifying them so as not to offend his self-love; and, though he never ~~assented~~, he never objected, but would extend his dry, hard lips into a grin, that displayed his long yellow teeth, for all the world like a horse's; or pass off some joke on how the young gallants would admire the gaber-lunzie's bonny wife. Then he would pat my cheeks, play with my ringlets, calling me his healsome giglet, his couchat, his daft lambie, and a thousand other pet names; while I, in the furtherance of my vain plans submitted to his dotage. Oh! Freville, though it ill becomes one so lost to preach either morality or religion, yet I have no hesitation in saying, that the woman, who from necessity or interested motives, kneels at the altar of her God, vowing to love a man she utterly abhors, not only outrages the laws of nature, of modesty, of truth, but makes a fearful stride towards future crime. And

my own sad soul the rapid progress
oute it more to my burlesque nuptials,
the maxims of Lord Beletrieve."

line," I said, for she actually quivered
," "waive these self-accusations. I
to hear how you managed in the
r I know you went there."

Freville," and she forced a smile,
rosy and trite observations, and in
e age, when the generality of unions
n interest or convenience, all I can
object must be common-place. So,
the McMisserton. When we were
ks married he told me to prepare to
m in a couple of days to Glenlow
Miss Rachel expected us: 'Indeed,'
had not so long continued in this
n, only she wished to have the way
fore you.'

ouncement fretted me: not that I
of consenting, but it brought matters
. So, wishing to carry my point
id that it was my intention to ac-
father to London, and to arrange for
re early in the spring: it was then

d at me with unaffected astonish-
n his hateful, broad Scottish accent
Heck, what a daft hizzie to think of

disputing your husband's commands. My giglet, is that the way you hope to go flaunting? I shall soon bring you to your tackling; and, as to your father, it is little of him you shall see in future, for he is almost as great a fool as yourself." This speech irritated me, and, giving way to my anger, I represented how cruel and unjust it would be in him to suppose a person of my age could consent to be buried alive in the Highlands.

"Without being in the least discomposed, he answered:—'You should have reflected on all this before marriage. If I was satisfied to barter the dignity of my ancient family, by uniting myself to the daughter of a man who followed a craft, you might well exchange the advantages of youth—a gift you have in common with the humblest—for the honour of having your name grafted on the genealogical tree of the McMissertons of Sutherland.'

"At another period I must have laughed at his solemn consequence; but then, terrified at the idea of being obliged to accompany him, I contended the point, saying that, though my father had been compelled by circumstances to follow business, he was just as well descended.

"'Admit it,' said he, gravely; 'still, in a chivalrous race it is a blemish on their escutcheon, seeing that the name and connexion are men-

ed without the cause which led to the degradation being specified, so the whys and wherefores of man's following business, are lost to posterity, shall explain to you.'

'By no means, General,' I answered, angrily; 'it is a loss of time, I assure you. I am perfectly aware of the antiquity of the McMissers,

Knowing it, you shall learn to respect me,' he answered.

replied saucily enough, 'It was not to revenge, but to love you, I vowed; and, if you would have me falsify my oath, you will not deprive me of all the recreations my youth delights in. You would oblige me to consider you as a jailer, not a tempter, tempting me to break my vow: so, reflect, Mac,' I added, coaxingly 'ere you refuse my reasonable request of spending a few months of the year in London, and then I shall cheerfully devote the remainder to you.'

His observation threw him into a violent passion. In his harsh voice, and as usual intermingling his words with Scotch phrases, he answered:

'Hoity, toity, you jade! the deil take your pretence, to think to deceive me with your phrase. I spent two years in that same d, long enough to understand their daffin and so you want some recreations in

London to reconcile you to your gaberlunzie, some dainty Jo to be jaukin with you ; while I, forsooth, stay at home like a cuif, sending you my tocher to waste upon whirligigums. You are but a silly vap-rin-gipsy after all your gab, or you would consider my experience. I entered the army at the boyish age of eighteen, a fine, tall, strapping, comely youth as ever left the Highlands, gallant withal, and full of winsome ways to please the lassies ; and many a bonnie lass whose name has long been forgotten in the grave, and many a bright eye now dimmed with age, loved to see the McMisserton, aye, and more too, no need of a wife then to care for me. Let me see, it was in the summer of 1755 that I entered the army, and proceeded to Ireland, and soon after sailed from Cork with General Braddock for Virginia. Well, well, I see you titter at this tale of auld lang syne, and if I were to tell you I fought in the field with a Wolfe and a Washington, and a thousand other heroes, it would be all the same, you would rather listen to some clavering billies wheedlings.' He paused, expecting to be contradicted ; but I made some pert remark, and he continued more passionately : ' Ay, and I fought in Germany, and gallantly too ; and for miles round the hills of Sutherland blazed with bonfires, and loudly the pibroch and bagpipe proclaimed the McMisserton's triumph ; and then

I visited your boasted country, rebellious Ireland. Now take all these circumstances into just consideration, and lay aside the foolish hope, that by the clatter of your tongue you can conquer a man who undaunted, braved the cannon's thunder ; it's enough to raize me, to hear a hizzie like you, who had not a plack for her tocher, thinking to manage me as if I was a mere bluntie.'

"At another time, I should have been amused at witnessing his fury ; positively his scant grey hair bristled like a hedgehog's, and his glassy eyes, of a pewter colour, actually glared on me like a tiger's ; then—to render his compound language more emphatic—every time he uttered a Scotch word, he struck the ground with a large gold-headed cane. In short, nothing could be more ludicrous to a looker-on ; but alas ! as the chief actor in the scene, I felt that to me it was likely to prove a tragedy. There was no mistaking his sternness of purpose, and I actually burst into tears as, no longer deceived by my vain fancies, I beheld in its true light the position to which in my unreflecting levity, I had doomed myself. Far from yielding gracefully to what I knew was inevitable, I still contended the point, representing that, as he was old enough to be my grandfather, he should reflect that our tastes must widely differ.

"Having recovered his composure he answered

care thoughts I must keep a sharp eye
seem to think I married you just to
idle gallants of the town ; however, w
to Glenlow Castle, sister Rachel shal
your duty ; and believe me, none ever
its gates without my knowledge. W
that dare ! And now I must leave you,
rather stand before the cannon's mo
a woman greetin, even though it is a
hizzie like yourself.'

"With these words, he marched
I flew to my father to entreat his
He listened to me with his usual ten
presenting how impotent all my effort
the McMisserton's authority must
trying to reconcile me to my fate, w
the truth, was sad enough, by fully ex
own distress, and his intention, I
provided for, of proceeding to I
making one more desperate effort to

parted, and a few days after, the General and I set off for Sutherland.

"And Aigline," I demanded, "was the ancestral residence of the McMisserton in reality a castle? I remember when the idea of visiting the wild glens and heath-covered mountains of Scotland formed one of the dreams of your youthful fancies."

"Yes, Freville," she replied, "but not as the bride of a man of seventy-three; and what I found more intolerable, was the companionship of that venerable and peevish spinster, Miss Rachel. Then as to the residence, it had nothing to entitle it to the romantic name of a castle, except the ivy-mantled ruins of an old donjon, which stood exactly opposite to the house, a square, shabby, ill-finished, half-furnished dwelling, fitter habitation for a farmer than a chieftain. The surrounding country, indeed, was fine, nay, magnificent in its scenery; but even nature receives tint from our feelings, and certainly while in Scotland there was no *couleur de rose* in mine."

"How Miss Rachel and her attendant nymphs must have admired you! Certes, Aigline, you must have appeared as the goddess of beauty amidst the brawny Highland race."

She laughed gaily, as she observed: "Oh, Freville! how little you comprehend their tastes and prejudices. In the first instance, ideas of

Miss Rachel, who I believe had ten miles from Glenlow, comeliness it, consisted in a strong-made, blue eyes and yellow or sandy hair; a striding walk, and in bounding through a reel or hornpipe."

"Then, Aigline," I said, "you of eliciting her admiration. How can to select you?"

"Oh! his taste was perverted first by having visited so many countries already told you, it was my voice, which captivated him; besides her good qualities, Miss Rachel none:—on me, however, is too good not to day after my arrival at Glenlow, by, I was coolly received—as the Mac clan could not be reconciled to the ing a shipwright's daughter—I he has surrounded her with one

he heezed the hizzie just to jouk her.' All this amused me, for I was malicious enough to enjoy Miss Rachel's mortification. Now, Freville, judge from this observation, how far the *distingué* air, which had excited the admiration of the Prince, and elected me a London belle, was valued at Glenlow: not an iota, I can assure you. The whole clan would not have given a mess of porritch for my beauty; still it is quite wonderful how the mind yields to circumstances, and were it not for Miss Rachel's interference, I think I could have got on tolerably. The old General really loved me; then I found amusement in jogging on a pony as rugged as a bear through the mountains and glens, and conversing with the old people, who being very intelligent and full of ancient prejudices,—moreover, replete with wonderful legends, and ballads, and historical facts—were very entertaining, and began to like the gaberlunzie's young wife for taking such an interest in their beloved country, when all was upset by my losing my temper one day that Miss Rachel was more pertinacious than usual, and, somewhat rudely telling her, that as soon as the General died—and he could not, from his advanced age, be expected to live long—I would reside at Glenlow, for the righteous purpose of banishing her from the seat of her forefathers. It is needless to say, that the very idea of being expelled

from her Paradise inspired horror. She flew in tears to make her complaint.

"Such a speech at any time must have mortified the McMisserton, but that morning being troubled with an indigestion, from an over meal of crowdie, seasoned to his particular taste, he was seriously angry, and did not for the day condescend to address me. This I bore with very Christian-like resignation; discovering which, he adopted another method of punishment; for immediately after dinner, Miss Rachel, with the most pompous air possible spread out an immense sheet of half-mildewed musty parchment, which she held open with her bony fingers, while the General clapping his spectacles on his high hooked nose, and leaning his thin gaunt figure over the table, so as to command a bird's-eye view of the valuable document, with the end of his cane, pointing to several characters, which to me appeared very hieroglyphical, he began muttering some names, when Miss Rachel screamed forth:

" 'Speak out boldly, Davoc, and show this craft-man's daughter from what ancient bluid you sprung.'

"He replied with solemn gravity:

"Rachel, that is not my present object; but I wish to impress on her mind, that, descended from a patriarchal race, with their blood I inherit their longevity, that is, so far as can be expected from

the revolving ages have made in the atmosphere increase of population, and other causes too profound for this winsome understand.'

he patted my cheek, and stroked down as if I were a child, saying in his softest

line, I am going to prove that we do sure time as the vulgar herd. Look ly at this our genealogical tree, and you rve that the founder of our noble house oc, after whom all the succeeding heirs mily have been named, aye, to the tenth n. Now, this Davoc was but a tiller of id,—for, remember, all greatness must ginning:—however, being a sprightly lad, d his evenings learning the use of the , and, besides, was an excellent bowman; even while his hands guided the plough, ; was with the wars; so, when the cele- nsurrection of Mary broke out, off he ight as a volunteer in the royal cause:— as the deed, and lucky was the conquest to hand he fought with the rebel chief Mc William, wrenched the claymore from rful arm, and laid it at the feet of Alex- , the son and successor of William, the cotland, and for this deed of loyalty and in arms, Alexander endowed him and his

heirs with this fief of Glenlow. And thus ~~the~~ gadsman became a feudal laird. Now this ~~evening~~ took place in the year of our Lord 1271. Next to him was’

“Springing from the table, I called out passionately: ‘Good Heaven! can you suppose me mad, to listen to the history of the McMissertons for six hundred years; believe me, I am content with my present knowledge of them.’

“‘I told you,’ again screamed out Miss Rachel, ‘that she was an unco-gilpey.’

“‘Silence, woman,’ exclaimed the General, turning angrily on her. ‘And you, Aigline, return, and I shall merely speak of my immediate grandfathers; bear in mind, your own sons—and I hope you will have many—’

“‘Will love to hear of their heroic deeds,’ I returned, with a saucy laugh: not noticing it, he said:

“‘As a hand holding a claymore is our crest, spite of your impatience I shall remark, in reference to it, that, in 1445, another of my ancestors, a lineal descendant of Davoc’s was elected to the honour of accompanying to France the embassy, who went there to choose a bride for James II. of Scotland; and the legend goes, that it was owing to the gallantry and the noble bearing of the McMisserton that Mary of Guelderland accepted of the youthful monarch. Be that

as it may, when the nuptials took place at Leith, Davoc presented to his King, as a wedding gift, the claymore wrenched from Donald McWilliam some two hundred years before. It was gracefully accepted, and hung up in Stirling Castle with the most prized of the royal arms.'

"Forgive me," said I, again interrupting him; "but I feel no interest in all this."

"'But your sons will,' said the General, with a sentimental sigh.

"I laughed again, whilst Miss Rachel, who feared to provoke his ire, looked unutterable things. For some moments the McMisserton remained silent; then after an inward struggle against the pleasure he found in conversing over the merits of his ancestors, he exclaimed:

"'Come we at once to the longevity of my great, great, grandfather, celebrated for his adherence to the unfortunate Mary, who lived to the venerable age of one hundred and three years; his grandson, my grandfather, at the age of ninety-seven possessed a strength of mind and body which promised long life. But, unhappily, in celebration of some foreign victory gained by the Lutherland yeomanry, he indulged in a debauch, which threw him into a fever, and carried him off in nine days. My poor father died very young, being but seventy-three. It was, however, the result of an accident, so bespoke no decline in the

powers of our family. Being particularly active, and of a light form, he was fond of boyish recreations, so one day, to amuse his grandson, the young McDuff, he laid his hand on his hunter's main to bound on its back, when the boy, full of tricks, struck the animal on the fetlock; this caused it to rear and plunge; my unfortunate father was dashed to the ground, and by a kick on the temple killed on the spot. Thus he was carried off in the very prime of his life.'

"No longer restraining my indignation, I exclaimed: 'General, can you be serious, to say a man of seventy-three was in the prime of his life? Why it is against scriptural knowledge. I cannot believe it.'

"He exclaimed angrily:

"'Then, please God, you shall see it, and seeing you must believe. I am the very image of my great great-grandfather, who lived to be one hundred and three, besides months and days, which your impatient temper would not wait to reckon; then I am hale in my constitution, temperate in my habits, composed in my temper, easy in my circumstances, and above all, breathing the fresh air of my native hills; so, as far as human calculation extends, I may calculate on reaching the same venerable age of which I now want about twenty-seven years; besides the months and days are all of consequence at the end of a man's life,

though little valued at its commencement. Now by that time you will have reached your jubilee year, or thereabouts—a steady age for women; so I shall be more content to leave you guardian over my sons or daughters, that may arise from our union.’

“I waived further contest with the General, which put him into such good humour, that for several days he did nothing but pet me in his uncouth manner; he acting the part of the ass, and I of the lap-dog, in the fable. For to irritate Miss Rachel, I encouraged him in all his fooleries, making him chase me round the tables and garden, play at shuttlecock, dance reels, hunt butterflies, he looking all the while as stiff and grim as a Don Quixote. His kilted Highlanders began to cross themselves, and swore the gaberlunzie was daft; and Miss Rachel, who, like many others, that are themselves absurd, still have a quick observation for the ridiculous in others, would constantly roar out, ‘Davoc, you are more of a coof than a collie, to let that giglet wheedle you into such fashions. I prophecy she will put you on the cutty stool ere long.’”

I interrupted Aigline, saying archly :

“And did the carlin’s—is not that the Scotch for a stout old lady?—spae come to pass? Now, do not look so fatigued from the subject, but tell me how long you sported with the old fool, and

what stay you made in the Highlands, and whether you cheered your solitude by a few more quarrels with Miss Rachel."

She answered: "In all, I lived with the McMisserton a year and nine months, and as to our quarrels they were too numerous to be related; still I cannot give a graphic description of my grievances; they were a sort of Lilliputian torments, very annoying to the sufferer, but which would appear as of no consequence in detail. My greatest crime was not giving an heir to Glenlow Castle: really the lament of the General and Miss Rachel on this head was absurd beyond belief. At one time they would represent the inconvenience and disappointment that must result from my obstinacy. To the Clan of the McMisserton sometimes I was scolded, sometimes petted on the subject; the next heir to Glenlow was in the female line, grandson of the very McDuff whose levity had caused the death of Davoc's father. Add to these tremendous faults, my dislike to parritch, sowans, haggis, crowdie, and all the unpalatable mixtures with which Miss Rachel fed the family. I may as well mention that, in every thing of economy the General sided with his sister; for, by a strange infatuation, while he hated his heir, he could not resist the secret impulse of a miserly disposition to heap up treasures for him.

"A short time before I fled from Glenlow, this McDuff Gower arrived—a most unwelcome guest; but still Highland hospitality would not close the door on kith or kin. He was a great, tall, ungainly youth, with fair hair and bright complexion, and spite of his country's prejudices, had the good taste to admire me, and to say it too. This lost him all favour in the sight of Miss Rachel, who was always complaining of him, and trying to stir up the General to jealousy. Out of revenge, McDuff would take an opportunity to throw salt or pepper into the crowdie or parritch; then the old man would scold Miss Rachel, she the servants, they the McDuff, who, full of boyish tricks and impudence, would deny it; so the whole house was a scene of confusion, which, to confess a folly, I rather enjoyed.

"In the midst of this nonsense, I received an account that my father was thrown into the debtor's prison. In a state of agitation I flew to the General, requesting he would accompany me to London and make some effort to release him. He mocked my folly, swearing a tremendous oath, that he would not part a bodle to assist a ninny who had squandered all his substance at the gaming table. It was a terrible truth; but his misfortune only attached me the more closely to my misguided parent, and I even condescended to treat of Miss Rachel to interest herself in his

favour; but she was a cold-hearted, malicious woman, and actually delighted in my misfortune. McDuff, witnessing this, being naturally generous and affectionate, and fancying himself in love with me, made such offers to the McMisserton if he would release my father, as his cupidity must have accepted, if the interest the youth showed had not awakened his jealousy; and now the childish bickerings and petty malice which had before reigned in our family, burst forth into the darker passions; and what with the false insinuations of the spinster, Miss Rachel, and the angry words of the General, the clan of the McMissertons imbibed such a hatred against me, that I positively began to think my life was endangered. While meditating how to avoid it, I received a letter, with the painful intelligence that my father was in a fever, and supposed to be at the point of death. All thoughts of self faded before this additional affliction; I knelt at the McMisserton's feet, wildly entreating permission to go and attend on him. Methinks but for his unreasonable jealousy, he would not have rejected my supplications, for he was not deficient in good feeling where his love for gold, the master passion, did not interfere; but then, whatever influenced him, far from sympathising in my natural grief, he treated me harshly—swore that I had some secret motive, or that I would not leave that diabolical

of a chiel McDuff Gower to go into a prison to tend my foolish father; and as his anger waxed warmer, he threatened to lock me up. Altogether he so provoked, so disgusted me, that I resolved no longer to submit to his tyranny. Quick at thought, I rapidly arranged a plan of escape; so rising from my knees, and commanding my emotion, I said: 'Enough, McMisserton, I shall never again press you on the subject.' He seemed pleased at my acquiescence.

"I soon found an opportunity of speaking to McDuff, and at once confided to him my intention of escaping from Glenlow. Though startled at its boldness, he made no opposition; his unrequited love rendered him my slave, and he willingly acceded to my plans. Accordingly at dinner he announced that he purposed quitting Sutherland on the following morning. His uncle received the intelligence with unaffected pleasure, Miss Rachel with regret, for she delighted in mischief, the only variety to her monotonous existence, and she feared, once the McDuff was gone, her brother's jealousy would die away, and she be deprived of the pleasure of tormenting him and injuring me.

"When retiring for the night, McDuff asked for the keys, saying that he would set off before daybreak; he did not wish to disturb the family, so would take them to his chamber. This con-

siderate arrangement was received with surprise by Miss Rachel; indeed she might well be astonished, as heretofore McDuff had devoted his whole time to annoying the household, and the keys were handed to him, with many thanks.

"As this stratagem had succeeded, all the rest was easy. In the middle of the night I stole from my couch, and while the McMisserton was in a deep sleep, I slipped on my habit, packed up my jewels, all of which had been my father's gifts, and gliding down stairs, was soon joined by McDuff, who had my mare, another of my father's presents, in readiness, and in a few moments galloped off from my Highland home, whose expected chains of gold had turned into iron."

"To say truth, Aigline," I observed, "it was a bold measure, yet I can scarcely blame you; to say, how did the young McDuff behave on this occasion?"

"Gallantly, generously, like a true son of Scotia; for, spite of the McMisserton clan, they are a noble race. I knew his youthful feelings were full of romance, and so, ere we departed from Glenlow, I represented to him that during our journey he should treat me with the most distant respect, as otherwise I could not accept of his protection, explaining, that though fully aware of the scandal likely to result from our eloping together, still, while supported by conscious inno-

d the conviction that by flying to my assistance I performed a sacred duty, I met all false reports with contempt. Alas ! the weakness of public opinion is to woman-slap down of one of the strongest of their virtue.

I proceeded by a lonely and circuitous route through, travelling slowly for the sake of safety. Arrived there, McDuff sold my watch which was valuable, and then, in spite of his pain and regret, I bade him adieu, and procured the public vehicles to London, and with no little difficulty, succeeded in gaining access into my father's prison. He was still under the influence of fever. By parting with my jewels, I was enabled to procure for myself the best medical attendance ; and after a few days recovered from the fearful complaint ; but I was no ministering to a mind so devoured by grief and remorse—for the misery to which my error had doomed me preyed on his mind, assuming all the principles of life. He underwent a rapid decline, and in a few short days followed him to his last sad home—a conclusion, Freville, to my strange marriage with McMisserton." She paused, and then in a low tone said : " Shall we take a walk or dismiss these gloomy thoughts ?"

" dear Aigline," I replied ; " but tell me

first;—did you again return to Sutherland, and if not, where did you go?—all concerning you, my best love, must interest me.”

“It is at least kindly said,” she answered with some bitterness; “but methinks, Freville, it were in better taste not to press me into a detail of events, which, from the circumstances under which we met, you must be aware, led to evil. Why,” she passionately continued, “wish me to trace back, step by step, the passions and the consequent misery, which sank me into the lowest state of degradation—a shame and reproach to my own sex, the slave, victim of yours, and worse again, a disgrace and affliction to the few, the very few, who in my present fallen state, are charitable enough to retain any remembrance of what I was, or compassion for what I am?”

“Forgive me, dear Aigline,” I said mildly; “by inquiring whether you had returned to the Highlands, I did not mean to offend.”

“True,” she replied quickly, “you put no other questions; but methought your looks implied more, and oh! Freville, the slightest allusion to the scenes that occurred subsequent to my poor father’s death awakens memories of such woe that my brain seems to wither.” Taking my hand in hers, she said in touching accents—“We have both been unfortunate, our best and dearest lie buried in the grave, the image of their beauty

d by death ; should not this terrible unity
lf draw us together by the bonds of sympa-

s speech, uttered in broken sentences, only
d to stimulate my curiosity relative to the
still I resolved not to press her on the sub-
ill a more favourable opportunity, so ringing
ell, I ordered our horses to be led out : then
affected carelessness said—"Cheer up, my
love, I regret having said anything to annoy
but, in truth, I never before suspected you
assessing such powerful sensibilities."

I uttered these words she turned very pale,
d convulsively, clasping her hands together,
xclaimed, "Oh! how these words agonize me."
and wherefore, Aigline?" I demanded. She
t her head, then after a visible struggle
ing some composure, exclaimed—"What
of explanation ; it matters not now who mis-
me;" then with a loud hysteric laugh she
l—"Besides, to preserve the beauty of
ony, when the actions are full of levity
ould the thoughts be. It were a terrible
aly to see the mind consenting to evil, while
pirit lamented over its corruption! That
d, were a foretaste of the hell to which the
are doomed."

saying, she rushed from the apartment. In
; an hour she returned : there was a flush on

her cheek, a tremor in her voice, and a light in her eyes, which assured me, that to elevate her spirits, she had had recourse to laudanum. This sincerely grieved me; but not affecting to notice it, I led her to her horse, and though the evening was far advanced, we rode to the Tuileries.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Aigline and I thus lived in solitude, presented a scene of political excitement and anxiety, seldom equalled; indeed, so powerful was the former that, for the time being, individual interests seemed forgotten in the public good, but according to the respective feelings of the people. On one side were to be seen the Royalists, who, while surrounded by a kingly state, and surrounded by ranks and distinction, still strove by a servile obsequiousness to win over to the Bourbons; on the other side the friends of Bonaparte, mourning over his renunciation, hating the Bourbons, and dissatisfied with the treaties negotiated with England, scarcely deigned to disguise their discontent, and burning with wish for vengeance. These passions offered no check to pleasure; the theatres were filled with dramatists and musicians from almost every country in Europe; all places of public resort were thrown open;

while the Court and nobility gave the most magnificent entertainments. To several of these I had been invited, for my reputed gallantry at Toulouse; and being considered one of the wealthiest subjects of England, of no despicable personal appearance, and with a taste for music, it may be certain I was accounted worthy of notice. Nay more, my secluded habits awakened an interest:—by some they were imputed to pride and fastidiousness, by others to a superiority of intellect, which found its pleasures in literature; but in either case, the less I sought to be noticed, the more my company was prized: such is the strange caprice of society in its ardent pursuit after novelty, grasping at objects the most difficult of attainment.

I had been led to accept several of these invitations. The deference with which I was received by those who sought my patronage, and the conversations I heard among some of the most enlightened and polished men of the day, rendered me discontented with my position. I began to reflect that I had not been just to myself; that there were powers of greatness in my mind which only required development; that I was whiling away my time and fortune in frivolous pursuits, and on objects which the most contemptible, possessed of wealth, could obtain. Resolving, henceforth, that ambition should be

I began to form schemes of political advent, and for this purpose, no longer shun-
society, courted the acquaintance of men in

might be expected, this wrought a change
habits: I was seldom at home, and Aigline
ft daily to the solitude of her broken

At first, I had formed excuses for my
on; but after a time even these ceased;
e or twice, when she pressed me to stay,
ght her unreasonable. Then she would
a woman's wiles to attach me, or at least,
e her company necessary. Yet, I do not
his resulted so much from love, as the
f being again deserted, and perhaps sunk
er in crime. Poor Aigline! even while
ad spirit rose in indignation, or sunk in
on, she would sing and play for my
ent; though, as some airs brought back
mory of the past, I could observe her
iver with agony, and tears rush down her
at these times, all selfish as I was, I would
othe her and sometimes insist on her

tioned that he had some important business to transact in Ireland, I concluded he had gone there, and no longer apprehensive of his meeting Aigline, proposed to her to accompany me to some of the theatres.

She hesitated, blushed, and then, with a sigh, answered:

"Dear Freville, since my disgrace, I have never entered into any society; of course the respectable would not associate with me, and I utterly abhor other society. You sneer, Freville; but it is not the less true. May we not loathe in others, the disease which consumes ourselves?"

I answered peevishly: "In the present instance, this speech is out of place. I merely wished to gratify you, by taking you to see the new play, and the crowd of foreigners likely to attend its performance. Really, Aigline, you provoke me by your caprice. You are offended when I leave you, and still will never accompany me!—now what am I to do? Would you have us linked together like two goats at the side of a ditch—when one draws forward, the other is sure to pull backwards, and so neither can ever escape the boundary. Rather too much of a good thing—Aigline," and I gave a forced laugh.

In a subdued voice she said: "Then, Freville, I shall no longer object to accompany you."

ve often wished to conquer my dislike to be en, for I am aware amusement might sometimes ean my thoughts from self—”

“And certainly,” I interrupted, “it were pre-
rable to the pernicious use of laudanum. But,
more of this ; say, would you prefer the
eatre or opera ?”

“The opera, decidedly,” she replied.

“Then,” said I, rising, “if you promise to be
erful, I will ride into Paris, and make in-
ries.”

She assented, and so we parted.

“As I rode slowly forward, I began to reflect,
ether my introducing Aigline might not be
nsidered an outrage on morals, by those men
lose good opinion, in my newly-formed schemes
ambition, I was desirous to conciliate, and
ny of whom were even more exalted by talent
d noble principles than by their high position,
d who, far from countenancing the freedom of
nners introduced by revolutionary principles,
rted all their influence to check the widely
eading corruption. Such apprehensions, and
pity for the unfortunate Aigline, whose pride
uld, by a public display, be immolated to my
nity, made me resolved, ere I introduced her, to
to the *café*, and sound the opinion of some of
military friends on the subject. I was inter-
pted in my musings by seeing a horseman

galloping forward. I soon discovered it was Mellish: muttering a curse at his being still in Paris, and concluding that he was going to the château, I called loudly to him to stop. At first he did not hear me, and then had some difficulty in drawing up his horse, while I actually trembled with terror, from the idea of his proceeding and seeing Aigline. At length, having succeeded in checking his steed, he came up to me, exclaiming:

“Deerhurst, this is fortunate; I was just on my way to your château.”

I stammered out: “Why, Mellish, it is so long since I have seen you, I had concluded you were gone to Ireland! Was not such your intention?”

He answered: “For the last few days I have been at Verdun on some military business, and did purpose setting off to-morrow on my way to Ireland, where I have business of consequence to transact. But an hour since I received a letter from George Tennant, which, probably, may detain me here for some days longer; it is about this I wish to consult you; and, as we cannot so conveniently converse on horseback, order your groom to lead our horses to the château, and let us walk on.”

“Impossible!” I exclaimed, with more vivacity than the subject seemed to demand, “I am obliged to proceed to Paris.”

Are you too much hurried to walk there?" he said, mildly. "There is a pleasant pathway to the left, retired and shaded. Deerhurst, do not leave me, for I am deeply interested in what I have to say."

Though anticipating some ill, I sprang from my seat. He quickly alighted, and, leading me across a field, we entered a narrow avenue, shaded by rows of acacias.

"This," said he, "will lead us to Paris, and is more than half a mile circuit."

He then put his arm through mine, and we proceeded in silence. After waiting a time, I called out: "Mellish, in the name of Heaven, where are you about? You stop me in my ride, dismount me off my horse, bring me to this retired spot, and then drag me forward without uttering a word. Forgive me for saying I rather suspect you have been doing honour to Bacchus."

He answered sadly:

"Would to God my emotion proceeded from mere inebriation—it would soon pass off. Whereas the cause from which I now suffer can never be removed. However, I must not delay you with my regrets; what I want to speak of is George Montant's letter. It is dated from New York, and should have been here upwards of a month."

It seems that George, who was one of the distinguished few who so gallantly defended An-

holt soon after its conquest, sailed in his frigate for the United States, and, being caught in the storms which proved so fatal to many, after encountering divers dangers, and having an almost miraculous escape, reached New York, where he now waits till his vessel is repaired."

"And what is there in all this," I coldly demanded, "to awaken interest or regret? On the contrary, I think we should rejoice both at George's gallantry and escape."

He answered vehemently:—

"Deerhurst, do you overlook Aigline's shame, and the disgrace it will bring on her gallant brother?"

"This was not our subject," I hastily replied.

"No," he exclaimed; "but my mind actually wanders when I think on her. I tell you, Freville, that wretched, abandoned woman is knit into every fibre of my heart. In vain I struggle to uproot my passion; at the same instant I love, hate, admire, loathe, her; in good or evil she engrosses all my thoughts; but, independent of self, I must be worthless, indeed, to be insensible to the affliction the knowledge of her guilt must convey to George, who is so devotedly attached to her, and whose ideas of female delicacy and honour are almost chivalric. But read his letter, and see how little he is prepared for such a blow."

As he spoke, a pang of agony and shame passed

rough my soul; for no sophistry could render me insensible to the injury I had done my two only companions, Mellish and Tennant. I felt humiliated and miserable; and, being unable to command my voice, remained silent.

Observing my emotion, he grasped my hand, claiming:—

“Deerhurst, this sympathy is worthy of you. Unfortunate in your own love, you can feel for hers. Forgive me when I acknowledge that, utterly, spite of all your generous friendship, my regard for you was lessened, for I imputed to you cold, callous selfishness, more destructive, more hateful, than any act of passion, and regretted being under obligations to one I began to despise. Except, my dear friend, this apology for the injustice of my thoughts,” and he warmly pressed my hand.

Much annoyed, to change the subject, I said: “I would rather not read George’s letter. Report from it what you wish me to know.”

“It seems,” he replied, “that the poor fellow was ignorant of his father’s death until he reached New York; there he found letters from his man of business, announcing that he had died in the debtor’s prison, but mentioning no further particulars, except that Miss Tennant had married a very old man, a General McMisserton, of Scotland, and that it was reported she had

why he did not apply to me, w
ties of duty and affection was b
him, and possessed full means of s
bably his distress proceeded fro
failure, of which I still remain ign
deed, nothing can be more ambigu
factory than my intelligence. F
money is placed in the National B
short of a revolution can deprive m
father's want of confidence must l
from some doubts of my affectio
he is gone, this adds to my afflictio
He then alludes to Aigline's marri
'The idea of a girl so accomplish
minded, making such an unequal all
to him monstrous ; in short, that
seemed to hang over his family.' A
of me in the most solemn manner,
inquiry relative to her, and write :

papers that our old schoolfellow, Freville Deerhurst, has come in for his grandfather's property; and better again, so distinguished himself in the Peninsula. Bear him my warmest congratulations on both subjects. I know they will be acceptable, for he is far too good a fellow to forget in prosperity old friends; and such is my confidence in him, I have no hesitation in requesting that, with you, he will become trustee to the sum of five thousand pounds—and for which I send a check on my banker—to be disposed of in any manner you both best approve for Aigline's exclusive advantage. It was ever my intention, when I arrived at an age to claim old Julian Ardent's legacy, to present her with that sum; and, probably, from my poor father's involvements, it may now be very acceptable. My dear Mellish, I shall not offend you or Deerhurst by offering any apology for this trouble; and am confident you will both, in this business, act towards Aigline with the zeal and tenderness of brothers.' He then enters into a long eulogium on her, and concludes with a hope that, on his return, we may yet spend many happy days together. However, Freville, I think you had best take the letter, and read it at your leisure, for George, in two or three places, speaks of you in the most flattering terms; and this reminds me of what his father was wont to say: 'How comes it that this wild lad, Deerhurst,

a stranger among us, should be the favourite of us all?' And then Aigline would remark so naturally, 'because he is so much handsomer than the others, and then he plays the key-bag so exquisitely. Then Mrs. Tennant's grave looks to the poor girl for the weakness of admiring beauty.'"

A sigh burst from Mellish at these recollections, and, without further observation, he would have handed me the letter, but I rudely pushed it back, exclaiming:—"No, no; where is the necessity? you have told me its contents."

Too much agitated to notice the strangeness of my manner, he said:—

"I conclude it is scarcely necessary for me to add, that my object in seeking you this morning was to consult on what is to be done."

"Is it your intention to acquaint George with his sister's ill-conduct?" I demanded, tremulously.

"Not for worlds!" he cried; "methinks my hand would be paralyzed as I traced the characters of guilt connected with one so dear; more especially when it was to convey such sorrow to George."

He paused, then exclaimed:—

"Would to God she might die ere his arrival! You start, Deerhurst, but I repeat the wish: would to God she might die, then her shame

might be buried with her. Yet the time is not long past since the very idea of Aigline's death would have checked the current of my blood."

He actually uttered a cry, struck his forehead, and rushed forward like one possessed. I followed slowly, without uttering a word. The whole scene had so confounded me, that I was like one under the impression of a fearful dream.

Mellish returned, and, again placing his arm through mine, said :—

"You must excuse me ; my emotions are unworthy of a man—of a soldier—but I have no reserve before you. This confidence is a great blessing, so a truce to apologies. Shall I explain my views on this subject ?—Of course you are too sincerely interested not to treat them with candour, and offer any objections that may arise in your mind ; and, being less excited than I am, you are far more competent to judge."

I made no reply, and he proceeded :—

"George Tennant having appointed us trustees over Aigline's money, we have not only a right to enquire after her, but, in justice to the trust, are called upon to do so. Of course the unfortunate girl left Paris with Lord Beletrieve ; when he, to elude his creditors, fled from it. But, Freville, to confess a truth, ever since she resided with him, have never lost sight of him, and have certain information that he is at present living in the

neighbourhood of Norwich with an old uncle of his, a clergyman."

Here I interrupted him to remark, it was the general belief that he had gone to Russia.

Mellish answered, "Not he ; the report was circulated merely to deceive his London creditors. However, I understand he has great expectations from this same uncle, who, living in retirement, and little conversant with the *beau monde*, is in perfect ignorance of his character, so I have not been able to learn any particulars of Aigline, but conclude that she must reside in the town of Norwich under an assumed name. Oh ! what a degraded position ! and rendered still more hateful by her indifference—nay, you say antipathy to Lord Beletrieve. By what accursed infatuation she was led is a mystery I have never been able to comprehend. But it may be that necessity now compels her to continue with him, for, Sir Freville, after all our boasted protection to the softer sex, we men treat women cruelly ; once they fall, there is no return for them, and, though this may be good for society in general, it is often fatal to individuals—the cutting off a member, that the body may be whole."

I said somewhat petulantly, "All this is nothing to the purpose. Say, how have you resolved to act ?"

"True," he replied, sadly. "My object, then,

is to seek her out, show her George's letter, and, if you agree, purchase for her an annuity with his gift, thus rendering her independent also. La Franck by his scriptural knowledge and eloquence, will try and entice her back to virtue. Deerhurst, you can scarcely comprehend the goodness of La Franck; he means to offer our dear penitent the protection of his aunt, a most amiable, religious woman. Surely Aigline cannot be so wedded to vice as to reject these advantages. As to me, I dare not venture much into her society; but you, Freville, might see her, and use a brother's influence for this noble purpose."

It is needless to enter into any account of my feelings as he thus spoke. I do believe a man is scarcely ever so debased, as not to be shocked at finding those he has betrayed and injured place unlimited confidence in him. Here was Mellish spreading out all his thoughts before me, never doubting my sympathy, and yet at the very time the beloved of his soul was in my own house; worse, again, in a distant clime, after years of absence, crowned with honours, and blessed with independence, George Tennant turned to the companion of his youth, whose worth, judging by his own noble nature, he never doubted, and appointed me as one of the protectors of his adored sister. Yet within the hour I had been planning whether my own ulterior views would sanction

my blazoning forth her shame. As these truths pressed on my soul, they pronounced me a villain, a cold, calculating, selfish, villain ; and I call Heaven to witness, so powerful was the impression that I grasped Mellish by the arm, calling out fiercely :

“ What do you mean ? How dare you make use of such an expression ?

He looked vacantly in my face, repeating :—

“ What expression ? I was not conscious of having spoken.”

This brought me to myself ; the illusion fled, but the impression remained. We conversed for some time longer on the subject ; as I grew composed, I strongly advised him to lose no time, if he could so arrange, in proceeding to Norwich, and taking La Franck with him, expressing a wish that he would write me any information that he could acquire. Pleased at my entering into his views, he promised. By this time we had reached Paris, and we then parted. As he shook my hand, conscience gave another pang. I reflected that, disappointed in finding Aigline, he might get into a duel with Lord Beletrieve, and, such was my horror at the idea of his discovering Aigline, that I thought at the moment his death would have been a relief.

CHAPTER X.

DISMOUNTED my horse, and to remove the
assant sensation of self-accusation, began to
, that after all it was not I by whom Aigline
Allen—wherefore then the crime? Had I been
enough to reject her, all the world would
ridiculed, not applauded me. Such acts of
mial and practical morality embellished
and romance, they being fables expressly
to amuse the mind by wonderful acts of
ess. Then a few such were recorded in
; but their being handed down from age
as wonderful proofs of virtue, proved in
how rare were the instances; and though I
tely fixed on ambition as my good, it was
al greatness or military, it was the exalted
of having my lofty brow surrounded by a
t, to be the Earl of Pondichery, or some
itle, not to be held up to the rising gene-
as a proper, well-behaved young man, a
1 edition of Sir Charles Grandison.

Pshaw! pshaw! it was too absurd. I reflected, that should the discovery be made, Mellish, La Franck, and Tennant would abhor me. In spite of my sophistry, there came to me one bitter pang, for though I considered it a weakness, I could not totally cast the companions of my youth from me, more particularly Mellish, so associated with Clara's. And yet I proceeded: "their anger is the result of prejudice." Truly the Duke of Beletrieve must have taken full possession of my soul, when I deemed as prejudices, a loving over his mistress's disgrace, a sister's shame, and a Christian mind the depravity of one of God's fairest creatures.

Still, replete with these thoughts, I came to the *café* I had frequently visited, and in the wish of smothering reflections, advancing to a table, joined a party of foreigners for their dissipation. Though I had often met some of them, I had rather shunned their society, but this only enhanced the acquaintance, and they received me with deference. In my reckless humour, I assented to opinions I should have acknowledged, talked a vast deal, sincerely, mocked sentiment as affectation, and as far as an English officer durst, upheld it. Then I quoted Lord Beletrieve and Ca

les, setting aside love, friendship, country, religion; in short, it was an "Idiot's me, all sound and nonsense," but unhappily evil afterwards. We spoke lightly of , rapturously of music, and having come to a final conclusion that they were the only in this dull, irregular universe worthy of living for, we set off to one of the theatres. and dancing, and merriment, and laughter here; but as far as regards my own , I can only compare the enjoyment to the mirth, sometimes practised by the doom-banish the dread of coming evil. Such as intermingled with the loud roar of the as some desperate crew felt sinking with wrecked vessel, into the unfathomable depths n; such sounds have resounded through over which hovered the angel of death, ng around the pestilence: but there is no peace, in such mirth; it is but a seem- r, by which the lacerated heart strives to itself.

morning still found me in Paris, and though ed from the night's debauch, I would have n Mellish to ascertain the day he proposed ; it; but I had an unconquerable objection La Franck, against whom I entertained ncible dislike. Nothing could be more led, as I had not seen him since we had

parted in Cork. I returned to the chateau in very low spirits: without commenting on my lengthened absence, Aigline entered into several inquiries relative to the opera and theatres, which whimsically enough she had taken a violent fancy to visit. I told her I was too ill to go, but hoped in a few days to be so far recovered as to attend to her wishes. This awakened her woman's tenderness, and for the next week she was all solicitude about me. I made my indisposition an excuse not to quit the house, and apprehensive, lest by some *contretemps* Mellish might again call at their villa, I remained on the watch. The sadder I appeared, the more Aigline cheered herself to amuse me. Independent of music, she possessed great powers of pleasing, and read and recited inimitably. Milton's sublime work of "Paradise Lost" was her favourite volume, and she read it with a justness and grace, that in itself would have commanded the attention of a crowded and admiring audience. As I listened, I could not avoid thinking that, in the enthusiasm of remorse at her degraded state, she likened herself to the apostate angels.

Tired of my retirement, without entering into any detail, I sent Lewellyn to the hotel where Mellish usually stopped, to inquire after him. On his return, he told me that Major Mellish, accompanied by another gentleman, had two days before

for Calais, on their way to England. This great relief; and I resumed my rides and with Aigline, but postponed going to the , though she accused me of caprice and ness, saying I first teased to gain her con- and then refused the gratification. A week and nothing of any consequence occurred. then the first of May, rendered so memo- y its being the day appointed for signing ty of peace so interesting to all Europe. urse I would not be absent on such an n, so early in the morning I left the , promising, if possible, to return in the ; with all the news, and entreating of in the meantime, not to quit the house, as vere dark hints thrown out, that several soldiers threatened to rise in opposition. mpanied one of the nobles immediately l in the treaty, and thus took an active the negotiations. As might be expected, resented a gallant show, and the most excitement reigned throughout; for though e the peace was a source of joy, many of risians were discontented, and darker pas- ashed from the eyes of the French soldiery ; they termed England's triumph; but as circumstance connected with the imposing ort-lived treaty of 1814, has become a mat- istory, I shall pass it over without further

I dined in company with some field officers of my acquaintance; there were besides foreigners, two French gentlemen present, in compliment to whom no allusion was made to politics or any of the leading subjects of the day; thus we confined our conversation to general and trivial topics; and it was mentioned that two young Italians, just arrived from Naples, were that evening to make their *début* at the Italian Opera. One of the French gentlemen politely requested me to accompany him there, offering me a place in his box. At first I declined, but on his pressing it, and several present intimating their intention of going, I consented. Though I rarely exceeded moderation, my spirits on that evening were much elevated, having, in some manner, been obliged to drink with every person at table; and it instantly occurred to me that it would be an admirable opportunity of gratifying Aigline, so I said I should be most happy to go, if I was permitted to bring a lady, who was herself a first-rate musician. A polite assent was given, and a promise to reserve our seats: so, returning thanks, I hastened to the château.

I found Aigline strolling pensively up and down the little garden; she flew with pleasure to receive me. Observing that she was unusually depressed, I imputed it to the heat, but she replied with a sad smile: "Freville, I rather think it was a knowledge of the stirring scenes

ing forward within so short a distance, and I so rely here."

I caressed her with tenderness, and assuming air of gallantry, declared that I had flown in every gaiety to accompany her to the Opera. She expressed gratitude, but said she would prefer a quieter time,—Paris was then too crowded. Half in fun, half in anger, I accused her of coquetry, ever refusing when she had the opportunity, and explained, if it was observation she wanted, the greater the number, the less likelihood of being noticed. At length, by my persuasion, rather vehemence, I gained her unwilling consent, and at my desire she promised to attire herself in the most becoming manner. While she was so employed, I entered the house, and observed that the dessert and wine remained untouched on the table. Llewellyn, who brought coffee, told me his mistress had started from her seat, of which she had not partaken, ordered it to be removed, and rushing into the garden, had continued pacing up and down till my return. In the while he spoke she entered, looking surpassingly lovely. In general the style of her beauty was brilliant, but on this evening she was rather reserved, and her countenance subdued to sadness. A high intellect and deep thought sat on her fine features," exciting an interest to sound the depths of a soul from which sprang such expression.

Llewellyn had retired on her entrance, so freed from restraint, I expressed my approbation of her appearance, gently chid her for not having dined, and then selecting some of the most delicate fruits, pressed her to eat. She took some grapes, and a glass of wine, and pleased at attentions—too often neglected—became more cheerful; and as I stood up to ring for the carriage, she also rose, and laying her hand on my shoulder, in a low soft voice, said:—

“Freville, were you always thus kind, I should be far less wretched.”

I drew her towards me, and stooped to press my lips on her upraised forehead, when through a glass door or low casement, and which, in consequence of the heat had been left open, Charles Mellish entered, and before we were aware of his entrance, stood gazing on us. At the instant we both saw and recognised him: Aigline sprang from my side, uttered a deep low cry, and falling on her knees buried her glowing face in her spread hands. My sensations were too complicated to be analysed; but the shock,—for I was greatly shocked,—conquered the inebriety under which I had laboured; plucking up all the courage I could command, I turned fiercely on Mellish; but even my boldness was checked when I beheld him leaning for support against the wall, his dilated eyes fixed on the form of Aigline, who remained

prostrate and apparently motionless before him, his ghastly complexion forming a contrast to his rags. He was in full uniform, his parched lips wide open, and every fibre in his face working with agony. I apprehended that he was about to fall into a fit, and rushed towards him, but he was perfectly conscious, for he struck me off, in the effort reeled, and must have fallen, but for Llewellyn, who on the instant entered to announce the marriage.

With his usual shrewdness, the valet saw all was not right, and stepping forward he caught Mellish in his arms, drew him towards the casement, tore off his stock, and opened his vest, demanding coolly water. This roused Aigline ; her shame was forgotten in anxiety ; she hung about Mellish, giving every assistance, in piercing tones calling on her only true friend, the most generous, the best of men ; then as he recovered, with a distracted air she supplicated his compassion, the next moment desiring him to curse her. Weak and exhausted from the violent struggle of his passions, first he seemed insensible to her attentions, and my dread of his falling into a fit, I was indifferent to them ; but when he was restored, and heard him in low tones thank her, my jealousy took the alarm, and in a stern voice I commanded her to retire to her chamber : she hesitated. Llewellyn who closely observed us all,

seeing my fury rise and dreading its results, in a respectful tone, said :

“ Sir Freville, as this gentleman still appears very weak, would it interfere with your arrangements to permit me to accompany him to his hotel : the carriage is in waiting.”

Inwardly thanking him for the suggestion, in a tone of cold politeness, I said, “ Major Mellish, my carriage is at your command ;” turning to Llewellyn I added, “ There is no need of your hurrying back, as I shall not go to the Opera this evening.”

I was then quitting the room, when Mellish rising, stood between me and the door, haughtily exclaiming :

“ Sir Freville Deerhurst, we part not thus tranquilly !”

I confronted him with equal fierceness, but ere I could reply, Aigline had glided between us, and sinking on her knees before Mellish, in mournful accents exclaimed :

“ Go, go, from this house of sin ; go, and no longer interest yourself about an unhappy woman unworthy of your care ; go, and if you would not add fresh tortures to the hell already burning within me, pursue not this quarrel with Freville Deerhurst ; for mark me, all the guilt is mine ! He knew not that I was in Paris—I sought him out, visited him in the night, stealing

retirement—" Tears choked her further
e, and she sobbed violently.

"this be true?" said Mellish, as he wiped
ps of agony from his forehead.

"my eternal shame it is," she murmured.
as evidently much affected, and for some
s did not answer; then he stooped as if
her, for her head nearly touched the
but starting back without touching her,

ine, you had better retire; after this
confession, my part in you is over; never
in you find any place in my thoughts.
ever loved me: wherefore then shall I
I you, and I were weak indeed could I
one so lost to every better feeling to hold
ience over my destiny.

was moving off, but still clinging to his
she raised her face towards him, crying

3 sentence ere we part, and for ever;
my fervent prayer that, whatever be my
ere and hereafter, yours may be blessed!
ink not that sin ever held such dominion
as to render me insensible to your good-
When my feet slipped in the path of recti-
others helped to precipitate me forward
3 fearful gulf of crime and sorrow into
had fallen; but you would have sacrificed

your interest—nay, your honour—to uphold me. Oh, Mellish! had I been less sensible of your kindness, less enthusiastic in my gratitude, I had not been so degraded.”

She rose, and was retiring, when affected by her address, and agonized at the idea of never again seeing her, he lost all self-command; careless of my presence, or, perhaps, not recollecting it, he clasped her hands in his, and completely off his guard, in wild, broken sentences acknowledged his passionate love and despair at her position; entreating by all she held sacred, that she would permit her old friend and companion, La Franch, to visit her in his character of Christian Minister: that he would explain to her the means offered of her yet living respectably, and that, under his guidance, even though the world rejected her, she would make her peace with heaven.

“Aigline,” he continued, “you were not formed, you were not educated, to associate with the wicked—”

He was proceeding, when I rudely interrupted him by mocking at what I termed his methodistical doctrine, and again commanding her to retire.

Fearful of irritating me any further she obeyed; yet I almost regretted her absence when I found myself alone with Mellish.

He was the first to break silence by saying, in an angry voice :

Sir Freville, what am I to think of this busi-

Aigline must have been living with you the evening we walked to Paris, when I mentioned the receipt of her brother's letter: knowing how could you advise La Franck and me to go to Norwich in search of her? By Heaven, does credibility, that a gentleman—a soldier, have stooped to such artifice!"

However insulting these words, I had no wish to resent them, as I hastily resolved, if possible, to leave him over not to betray the business to George Tennant. So evading a direct reply, I

Major Mellish, permit me first to inquire, by what right you this evening stole on my privacy and denounced? Also, why, when I sent my servant to the hotel to inquire after you, he was to suppose you had left for England?"

I actually trembled with indignation as he uttered:

My intrusion was, indeed, an interruption; but that is not to the purpose. The right which I claim, is that of friendship—there, Sir, is my right; it, was past intimacy and friendship—there, I can never err; for, from henceforth, Sir, I shall be Mr. Deerhurst, our acquaintance ends. By the way, I would not call you friend, though earth and heaven joined but us two! And now for your other question—why your servant was led astray as to my movements? On what principle, Sir Freville,

should I stoop to the meanness of deception? There is nothing in my conduct I need blush to acknowledge: your servant was told the truth. La Franck and I set out for Calais; while waiting there for a favourable wind, I received a letter to acquaint me, that owing to the recommendation of Lord Wellington, who had more than once honoured me by his notice, I was appointed to the Lieutenant Colonelcy of the ——. This event brought me back to Paris; but La Franck proceeded to Norwich, on the wild-goose chase you were so obliging to send us."

"My dear Mellish," I exclaimed, "let me first congratulate you on your promotion, still more on Lord Wellington's notice; that, indeed, is an honour any man in England must be proud to boast of: and now I ask your pardon for not having, on our last interview, mentioned that Aigline was residing in my house. Reflect calmly, and you will see the injustice of supposing I could betray her confidence."

He pressed his hand to his forehead without speaking: and, affecting a light tone, I proceeded:

"I am aware, Mellish, from our former acquaintance with Aigline, when, of course, no one could have anticipated her present position, also the boyish friendship existing between George and me, that our now living together, has an

ward appearance ; but with all your methodism, Mellish—and I must admit that since your intimacy with Parson La Franck, you are most dily—you could scarcely expect me to marry Aigline.”

My affected indifference led me too far. I had rung every fibre of Mellish’s heart. He, whose firm carriage in the field of battle had commanded the notice and admiration of the first general of the age, now paled before me. I saw him stagger from very weakness—the weakness of a tortured soul, while drops of agony poured down his face ; yet, he struggled hard to compose himself, and to treat me with the contempt I so well deserved. To this purpose, he went to the table, and, unable to stand, sat down near it, and drank some wine and water ; seeing which, he said :

“ Mellish, I entreat your pardon for anything I may have said to offend. The truth is, my position, in respect to Aigline, is so awkward, that I don’t know how to act, or what to say. By her own words, you know that until she sought me, I was even ignorant of her being in Paris : I confess a truth, in deeper interests, I had nearly forgotten her existence. Now, Mellish, think of this, and say, could I reasonably have been expected to reject the love of such a woman ? I, chivalric as you no doubt are, still, me-

thinks it would be rather a Don Quixote-like feat of errantry, to throw down your gage in support of her! However, should such be your intention, I am at your service," and I gave a sarcastic laugh.

"Not a man, but a demon!" he reiterated; "and lost as is that miserable woman, from my soul I pity her, for she is in your power. Merciful heaven! I did not think the human heart could be so cold, so callous, so indifferent to the feelings and happiness of others; but I pity, not envy you. Glory on, Sir Freville, in the selfishness which teaches you to forget the dead, and triumph over the living; but, insensible as you are, were I capable of your malice, I could send a pang through your heart, which would cause it a torture even more exquisite than what I now suffer."

"What mean you?" I said, tremulously: "is George Tennant dead?"

"You would rejoice if he were," was his cold reply.

"Mellish," I continued, forcing a smile, "we are bickering here like two school-boys. I again apologize for having offended you; at this instant you have your revenge, for your ambiguous words alarm me. Are Clara's sons dead?—In good or evil, anything connected with her memory is dear to me."

re not," he answered; "and now, Sir
us set aside these objects of interest,
o business."

as !" I repeated with unaffected sur-

lative to money," he answered; "but
ould be better for me to write on the

ar Mellish," I cried, with vivacity,
nt money, command me. You know
ousands—tens of thousands at your
ay, more, I shall feel obliged by your
o far to our former confidence as to
."

spoke he looked quite furious, then
"Is it possible you can, for a moment,
e, as to suppose any extremity could
to accept a compliment from you? Or,
nd become so debased as to think self-
o guiding principle of all men? Sir
y business is to tell you that, as fortu-
resent peace permits me, without dis-
sell out, I shall resign the Lieutenant-
even at the risk of offending Lord
, and then dispose of my majority; by
as I shall have nearly money sufficient
for the purchase of my troop, also the
sent me anonymously to Alicant."

God !" I exclaimed, "are you not mad,

under your circumstances to sell out of the army, and that too at the very instant Lord Wellington has taken you by the hand? Reflect, you have no other means of subsistence; that, indeed, would be paying dear for a woman's love."

"I have no other way of paying my debt to you," he replied; "and I tell you, Sir Freville, I would sell my body to slavery, and work for the residue of my life chained to the galleys, rather than continue under pecuniary obligations to a man I despise! You sneer, and think me romantic, absurd, prejudiced; be it so. I certainly am not a Cosmopolite to mock and ridicule every holier feeling and affection. As to Aigline's love, I never possessed it; happily now, also, I am aware that as she had before fallen, few will condemn your conduct relative to her; yet you cannot be so dishonourable, so ungenerous, as to keep her in ignorance of her brother's gift. At all events, as the money is lodged in my keeping, I will send a man of business to apprise her on the subject, and with that, being a legal measure, you cannot interfere; for though religion may be treated as an illusive affection, and duty as a farce, still until this wonderful advance of intellect sets the law aside, it is imperative; and though that too may be a prejudice, still even Aigline's case proves how necessary it is. And now, Sir Freville, farewell; should chance ever throw us together, we meet as strangers."

He was hurrying off, in his excitement forgetting his stock and hat, when I called out to remind him. While he was arranging his dress, I said :

"Colonel Mellish, you lord it over me with a high hand: ungenerous enough—first, because my right wrist is yet too weak to guide a pistol; next, because while you mock at other men's prejudices you have your own, and I know object to duelling. However, you can scarcely doubt a gentleman's assertion, and I solemnly swear I never forwarded any money to you anonymously, either at Alicant or any other place; and if this assertion is not satisfactory, I have no objection to swear to the fact."

"This is very surprising," he said thoughtfully. "Except yourself or George Tennant, I know of no person likely to assist me; and at that period George was on the distant seas, and by no possibility could have learned of my embarrassment—he had not even time."

"May it not have been La Franck?" I demanded.

"No: he is poor, and supports his aunt and sisters."

"After this, you of course will not dispose of your commission?" I said inquiringly.

"I still," he sternly answered, "am indebted to Sir Freville Deerhurst for the price of my commission." So saying, he hastened from the apartment.

CHAPTER XI.

LEFT to myself, my forced spirits fled, and I yielded to the most painful and contrary emotions: Now almost cursing Aigline for having sought me out, and the next instant burning with consuming jealousy for her preference to Mellish, whose ambiguous words—that he could strike anguish into my soul—I verily believed were only spoken at random; and I concluded on despising his friendship. What to me, who possessed so many advantages, could be the friends and companions of my youth, or the associations connected with them? In the midst of these conflicting thoughts, Aigline entered, looking very languid, and the traces of recent tears were on her cheeks. Her dress, too, was dishevelled, and her whole appearance bore a look of abandonment, which contrasted sadly with the rich gems which sparkled through her dark hair, and the gay flowers intermingled with her dress. In quick, quivering accents she cried out:

ask, Freville, and say, is another sin to be
to my soul :—have you and Charles Mellish
on a duel ?”

replied coldly, “All this anxiety proceeds
for Mellish—I hold no share in it; how-
ever, I do not blame you; first love is
most powerful. I have long suspected
my fancy to me was the mere result of
and I am now convinced.”

“to me, Freville,” she exclaimed, burst-
tears. “But you are right: I deserve
humiliation.”

replied coldly on her, I sarcastically added :
“tempted you to desert Mellish? There
is no lack of passion on either side; but
the proverb says : *de gustibus non est disputa-*
”

“me!” she passionately cried, “to taunt
at a most unfortunate woman; but my very
position, by rendering me reckless, gives me
the right to fly. I no longer remain to be tormented
”

was rushing from the apartment, but still
with jealousy, I caught her by the arm,

“as a scheme to fly to Mellish; but if you
do challenge him, though I should be killed
on the spot.”

“You have not already done so, and I will

forgive you all your cruelty," and she clasped her hands in supplication.

"Compose yourself, dear Aigline," I said, leading her gently towards a seat; "I assure you there is no intention of a duel between me and Colonel Mellish; and you must know he has just obtained a Lieutenant-Colonelcy through the interest of Lord Wellington. I tell you this because I know it will afford you pleasure."

She replied with animation, "Everything that tends to his advantage must please me; and, if goodness receives its reward, Mellish must be blessed."

This observation again awakened my jealousy—the jealousy of a weak vanity—and I answered sneeringly: "Perhaps he may be blessed by turning preacher under La Franck's auspices, for he is going to quit the army."

"And wherefore?" she demanded.

"Oh! from all his heroics; he is so indignant with me—I wish I could say because of your preference—that he vows by this and by that, by sword, pistol, blunderbuss, that he would not be under a pecuniary obligation to me for the throne of France—is not that the grand object of dispute of the present day?—so will throw up his Lieutenant-Colonelcy. No despair, I wot, to Lord Wellington, who can find gallant fellows enough ready to accept of it. Then he will sell out

he army, to repay me the price of his troop, which he now regrets having ever accepted from such a man; nay, being a romancer, and, consequently, having met adventures, he insists that while he was at Alicant, I forwarded to him anonymously a large sum of money to relieve him from some pecuniary embarrassment; and, to repay this gift, of which I vow I know nothing, he is going into slavery, or some such freak. In my soul I think poor Mellish is moon-struck." I spoke this with an air of sarcasm and irony, though, in truth, I was oppressed with sad-

Aigline, who had listened with the greatest attention, exclaimed with vivacity:—

Oh, Freville, if possible do not permit Charles Mellish to sell out. He has no dependence, except on his profession, to which he is such an honour. Will you not take the hint, and have some money conveyed to him secretly?"

He answered petulantly:—"Aigline, you forget I am not at this moment very well pleased with Colonel Mellish; and most certainly shall not condescend to humour one whose spirit is too proud to accept of an obligation; so let him be, he well deserves it, and it will rather afford me pleasure."

No, no," she passionately cried; "he deserves it; with him humanity and courage go hand in

hand. It was for my sake he first got involved; and, after all my sacrifices to save him from the stigma of cowardice, or the misery of distress, shall I now see him quit the army; and, when this short-lived peace—for all say it cannot last—passes away, and war commences, perhaps to enlist as a private soldier! I tell you, Freville, the very idea tortures me.”

“Ah,” I exclaimed, dashing away her hand, which she had laid on my arm; “for your sake he got involved; you should have been more wary in your entreaties, and not betrayed that secret. This proves you lived with Mellish, and he, most virtuous youth, had the effrontery to deny it—forsooth he fled from the temptation. Lying hypocrite, how sincerely I despise him! But I shall sift this business, and on your brother’s return explain all to him—then he can judge between us.”

I spoke at random, and in broken sentences, scarcely knowing what I said. Before I uttered the last words Aigline gave a fearful cry, and rushed up and down the apartment in a perfect frenzy, wildly tossing her arms and tearing her hair. No language can express my horror! Oh! how bitterly I cursed my mean jealousy that had led to such a result! Had I driven the hapless being to insanity? Had the heart so long tortured by conscious guilt at length broken? Witnessing

the spectacle of her woe, my own reason nearly failed. I just retained recollection enough to know that she tottered on the verge of madness. One word of either kindness or reproach might confirm it, so I remained passive, till at length quite exhausted, she flung herself carelessly on a couch, and, as I heard her convulsive sighs, and saw tear after tear rolling down her face, I actually fell on my knees to return God thanks. Oh, how naturally in extremity the greatest sinner feels that all power lies in his Creator !

Aigline was the first to interrupt the silence ; she rose, and, though tottering from weakness, advanced towards me. She was the very image of despair ; her long dark hair streaming down her shoulders, while, the flowers and gems with which I had obliged the poor victim to ornament herself, seemed a mockery of her woe.

I sprang towards her, and twining my arm round her waist, addressed her by every endearing name, entreating that she would be composed ; and, leading, or rather drawing her to the table, was offering her some wine, when, pushing me aside, she filled out a large goblet, and, before I was aware of her intention, drank it off.

“ Good Heaven, Aigline,” I cried, “ why have you taken so much wine ? You are already dreadfully excited ; let me lead you to your couch, and I will watch by you all night, and to-morrow,

when we are both composed, apologize for my ungenerous anger."

Again she uttered her fearful cry, as she exclaimed :

"Freville, I shall never be composed till you pledge your solemn oath not to betray me to George. Oh ! my brother, my honourable, gallant, high-minded brother, I deserve all the misery that blasts me, for bringing disgrace on you. Yet you will mourn over my fall, nor in your regret for the wretched Aigline think of the dishonour she has cast on your name."

Again she wept bitterly, while I uttered the most solemn assurances that I would die before I would speak lightly of her to George, and that she should obtain the same promise from Mellish.

"I need it not from him," she replied ; "amidst all my errors Mellish loves me—and true love never betrays its object—besides, he is the very soul of honour ; but, Freville, painful as may be the truth, your principles as well as mine have been tainted by the Cosmopolite doctrines of that Belial, Lord Beletrieve, and in becoming depraved, we have cast aside all holier feelings ; and, though there may be fellowship among the wicked, there can be little confidence, for who can depend on those who obey the impulse of their own passions ? You look angry, Freville, but, as in hap-

As I told you, the great difference that lies between us, is, that you rush blindfold on the destruction, whereas I, though without time to retreat, behold the gulf of irremediable into which I am hastening."

She gave an hysterical laugh; I made no answer. At last she said:—

"Do not take some more wine; for, to satisfy my doubts relative to Mellish, I shall relate facts connected with our meeting at Alicant, and will explain the mystery of the money he gave me anonymously."

She took the goblet from her hand, observing: "No, no, no, you shall not drink it; and for this reason I will not listen to your relation."

"No, Freville!" she vehemently exclaimed, "I will in all things thwart me—do not drive me to the relief of this night's anguish; it is necessary that you should hear all the facts relative to the case."

"Add not an additional pang to my sorrow by letting him suffer: as to the wine, I wished to drink it to support me under the recollection of past scenes;—however, it is better that it should irritate without relieving me—but to no purpose. I must insist on your listen-

She then contended the point, and at length succeeded in prevailing upon her to retire to her room.

I saw little of Aigline during the three following days. She was taciturn ; yet when I regarded her unobserved, I could perceive that she was labouring under a high degree of excitement. On the morning of the fourth day, she entered my study abruptly, and placing a packet on the table, instantly departed. The reader will not doubt that, suspecting its contents, I snatched and tore it open hastily. It was headed "The Story of Aigline," and I give it, as it was written :

"Freville, I have already acquainted you with the particulars of my marriage with the McMisserton, and its subsequent events, until I joined my poor father in prison ; but to spare myself from dwelling on his melancholy fate, I omitted mentioning how, a few days previous to his death, he called a meeting of his creditors, the result of which was, they came to an arrangement to give him a few hundred pounds ; these he immediately bequeathed to me, and like every other event of my life it proved unfortunate, by rendering me in some degree independent, for I hastily resolved not to return to Glenlow Castle. Indeed, I had my doubts whether I should be received there ; consequently, after accompanying my father's remains to their last home, I removed to the neighbourhood of Richmond, where I engaged apartments in a secluded but romantically

situated cottage, outside the village, and there took up my lonely residence.

"Freville, you may remember while you were staying in London, my introducing you to a Lady Mainstown, a haughty dame, who, to oblige Lord Beletrieve, sometimes condescended to chaperon me;—well, Lord Mainstown died, and her Ladyship being left with a small jointure, removed to the neighbourhood of Richmond, and chancing to see me in church, the only public place to which I ever resorted, and being related to the McMisserton by the female line—condescended to acknowledge my acquaintance, claimed me as a connection, and constantly invited me to her house. Now, in all this there was not a spark of benevolence or friendship; the fact was, her vanity and love of society having survived her means of commanding it, she grasped at every incident likely to give her pleasure, or draw company to her saloon, which no longer offered many attractions. Aware of my musical talents, she paid me the greatest court. At that period my father had been some nine months dead, and my health and spirits being renovated, I gladly accepted her invitations, so far as spending a morning or evening in her society; but always, spite of her invitations and occasional fits of sullenness—for she was very ill-tempered—insisted on returning home to sleep.

‘ This intimacy, on both sides one of convenience, during the summer season was very agreeable ; but when the winter nights came on, to me it proved a constant annoyance. The few acquaintances of rank of which her Ladyship could still boast, had either gone to London, or at Christmas to their country residences, so that Richmond was deserted ; then she had not a single resource within her own mind, while a fidgety, discontented temper kept her in a constant state of irritation in seeking for excitement ; however, as her house possessed the advantages of a tolerable library, fine musical instruments, and occasional visitors, I submitted to her despotism, for positively her demands on my time and talents, amounted to tyranny. In this manner the autumn passed on ; but in January, our dulness was enlivened by the arrival of Lady Mainstown’s nephew, Captain d’Estonville Howard. He was the only son of Sir Horace Howard, and his mother, who had been a Mademoiselle d’Estonville, a very beautiful foreigner, and an heiress, died in giving him birth. This doubly endeared the child to Sir Horace, who, for his sake, resolved never to form a second alliance. While yet a youth, d’Estonville entreated permission to enter the army ; long Sir Horace resisted his wishes, but observing, that stimulated by the stirring wars then extending over Europe and

erica, his military ardour daily increased, he length consented, and soon after saw him art to join his regiment in Canada. There stonville continued for about two years, and then ordered to Demerara, where he was eked by yellow fever, very prevalent at the od. He recovered but partially, for his ss terminated in a low, intermitting ague. No er did the intelligence reach Sir Horace, than ing every danger, he set off for Demerara, uined there till d'Estonville was sufficiently vered to undertake a voyage, then obtaining rtificate of his being too ill to attend to ary duties, accompanied him back to and. Soon as his health improved, being much engaged with parliamentary business—he was a very violent politician—he advised tonville to remove for a time to Lady stown's. Such were the particulars with h, in her own prosy way, her Ladyship ainted me on the evening previous to Captain ard's arrival.

D'Estonville came, and from that hour Lady stown's dull residence was a scene of happiness. She really loved her nephew, and though knew I was young, deemed beautiful, and rated from my husband—for I had confided er the position in which I stood with the Misserton—either from a total want of moral


feeling, or recklessness about others, or more probably from incredulity in the belief of those powerful sensibilities, of which she was herself incapable, she constantly exposed me to his dangerous society; for solicitous to renovate his broken health, and cheer his spirits, she looked upon me as the constant source of amusement. Oh! how willingly, for his sake, I brought into requisition every power of pleasing; the exertions which before had been a task, were now perfect enjoyment.

“Freville, I wish you had known d’Estonville. He was a noble and dignified person; his face could not be termed handsome, but it was engaging from its candid, playful expression; although at the period his health was delicate, still he was full of a buoyant, happy spirit, generous, gallant, enthusiastic; he was the very soul of honour, free from all selfishness, and almost faultless in his own character, he never spoke ill of others, and affliction from him ever found compassion and aid. Alas! in her love of hearing herself talk, Lady Mainstown had only awakened his sympathy in my behalf, representing my ill-assorted nuptials, my father’s untimely death, and my sacrifices for him—as in her selfishness she chose to call the simple performance of my dearest duty.

“Well, the winter passed on; my reading, my

music were every evening called forth to amuse d'Estonville; frequently Lady Mainstown was engaged to small parties in the village, for when it suited her purpose she could condescend to mix with an humbler class than her own. When we were thus left by ourselves, d'Estonville won all my secrets; and frequently in gentle accents, but with strong reasoning and manly sense, represented the danger of one so young, so fascinating, as he chose to term me, separating from her husband, and would press me to return to Glenlow Castle. But the horror I expressed at the idea of again living with the McMisserton, silenced him; so yielding on that point, he would advise that I should take up my sole residence with Lady Mainstown—who had invited me—representing that the annoyances and *désagréments* to which her temper would subject me, would be trifling considerations when put into competition with the invidious remarks to which my solitary position exposed me. Such were the general subjects of our *têtes-à-tête*; he advised as a brother, oh! why did he learn to feel as a lover—and I—but all these recollections of the past are agonizing, and of no avail.

“ March came; the weather proved unusually mild for the season. D'Estonville's health was quite restored, and at his request I laid aside my mourning; even Lady Mainstown complacently



me on my appearance, and I fancied with justness, for the exquisite though undefined happiness I daily experienced cast its glow over my countenance. In the midst of this delight—for it was delight—a letter arrived from Sir Horace, saying, that as he could not endure the idea of d'Estonville's returning to the West, he had succeeded in getting him exchanged into a cavalry regiment, then in Spain, and that he must get ready without delay to join the *depôt* who were quartered at Manchester. In conclusion, he added, 'I detain you, d'Estonville, on receipt of this, to make your adieus to Lady Mainstown, and join me to-morrow in London. Your health being re-established, there is no necessity any longer to trespass upon your aunt's hospitality; besides, as in a few days I must proceed to the North of England, I wish in the interim to enjoy your society.'

"The morning that this letter reached d'Estonville, as usual, I was on my way to spend the day with Lady Mainstown, whose villa lay at the distance of about half a mile from my lodgings. The direct path to it was partly through a meadow and partly through an avenue planted with alders. I had bounded over the stile that led into the latter, for the buoyancy of my spirits extended to my frame, and was tripping forward in my happiest mood, when Captain d'Estonville unex-

pectedly joined me. Struck by the sad expression of his countenance, I exclaimed :

“ ‘ Bless me ! what has happened ? You look ill—very ill.’ ”

“ He tried to smile as he answered : ‘ Nothing very serious ; on the contrary, I believe I ought to feel well pleased ;’ and drawing my arm within his, he handed me Sir Horace’s letter. As I read it I could not disguise my emotion, awakened by the surprise and regret I experienced at the idea of our immediate separation. Until then I had not even suspected how inexpressibly dear he was to me ; and the agony of my mind increased, lest discovering my sentiments, he might despise me for the weakness ; for I knew he had been educated in the very strictest ideas of morality, and, during all the solitary hours we had spent together, viewing me as the wife of another, had never made the slightest advance towards my affections.

“ I tried to mutter out some words of cold politeness—of surprise, at the suddenness of his departure, as he had proposed remaining three months longer at Richmond--overlooking that his father’s letter explained the whole business—then, with equal inconsistency, I said that, being severely ill all night, I was on my way to apologize to Lady Mainstown for not spending the day with her, but that as I had met him, he could

make my apologies. So saying, I hastily turned back, without looking up in his face, or bidding one farewell. For some time he remained immovable, without offering to follow; but, observing me stagger, he darted after me, and again drew my arm through his. This tenderness quite overcame me; I could no longer command my tears, which rolled rapidly down my face. All the time, d'Estonville never spoke; but, when we reached my lodgings, he supported me to the small reception-room, and then, with the utmost mildness, but the manly sense which throughout had marked his character, said, that, in the absence of my gallant brother, friendship should supply his place; and he again energetically advised me to reside with Lady Mainstown, or some other female friend; dwelling upon the awkwardness of my position;—and no doubt penetrating the state of my feelings, he added;

“I am selfish in the wish; for, after all the cheerful evenings we have this winter spent together, and your kindness in amusing me during the hours of ill health, it would be painful to have our acquaintance so totally ended, as not, Mrs. McMisserton, even to know of your existence. Whereas, if you are with Lady Mainstown, I shall, through her, hear every week, for she has promised to correspond with me.”

“Provoked and mortified at his coldness, with

as much composure as I could assume, I said, that it was my intention very soon to proceed to Ireland, where I still possessed friends; but that, in the meantime, if her Ladyship renewed her invitation, I should certainly accept it.

“He thanked me with calm politeness for taking his advice, then rose from his seat, saying, in a low voice :

“‘I shall make your excuses to Lady Mainstown.’

“His hand was on the lock of the door; I could scarcely suppress a cry as the idea of never again seeing him flashed across my mind; in a voice scarcely intelligible, I exclaimed :

“‘Captain d’Estonville, would it not be right for me, if my head-ache recovers, to go this evening to Lady Mainstown?—She may be offended: you know she cannot endure disappointment.’

“‘Oh! better—far better not!’ he exclaimed; and ere I could answer, without bidding me one adieu, he sprang down the stairs: the next moment I saw him darting by.

“Though I have since experienced such accumulated sorrows, such a sense of guilt, such remorse, still the misery of that day presses on my memory. For the first time I truly loved, with all the ardour—the sincerity—the devotion of which my enthusiastic nature was capable.

The last few months had been like a dream of rapture, for every day had been spent in d'Estonville's society, and with all the delicacy and refinement which then influenced me, while I could see him—hear him—converse with him, I asked no more: there was bliss in the very consciousness of being in his neighbourhood—of knowing that a few moments might bring us together; but now he was gone, probably we should never meet again! and worse, oh! a thousand times worse, he felt no reciprocal affection for me! and, while my soul seemed to take wings to follow him to earth's remotest verge, he cared not for me—thought not on me! or, at best, considered me merely as a kind-hearted, unhappy woman, who, in some degree dependant on others, strove by every means to oblige and please.

“As these thoughts pressed on, my soul for the first time gave the reins to those frantic passions, which have since wrought my destruction. Now I fell into hysterics, then for hours lay prostrate on the ground; and thus the day passed on, and with evening I resolved at all risks to gain one parting view of d'Estonville, so, arranging my dress, I hastened to Lady Mainstown's. As I approached the house, I was dreadfully agitated; but, in the abandonment of my mind I was quite reckless, and, entering it with my usual familiarity, made no inquiries, but went up at

once to the saloon. D'Estonville was there alone, for Lady Mainstown had gone to one of her eternal parties. He looked miserably ill, and—but no, no, I must not dwell on the scene that ensued—enough. A mutual confession of our attachment ensued; the result was a passionate entreaty on his side, and a too readily granted promise on mine, that, whenever the McMiserton died, I would be his bride. God of heaven! the bride of d'Estonville! it could not be that such unalloyed bliss would be permitted on earth, translating it from a dark scene of trial and suffering to a paradise so perfect in its enjoyment, that the angels looking down from their high sphere might wonder and envy. Oh! no, no, sin and sorrow are mankind's natural inheritance; wherefore should I escape?"

"Solemn were the vows of d'Estonville that though twenty, nay thirty years elapsed, never would he unite his fate to any woman's but mine. I received these assurances in the same sincerity they were given, and then we were more composed, and I felt happy; for my love was no longer without return or hope, and I promised in all things to be guided by his wishes. During the whole time, the generous youth treated me with the respectful distance a fond brother would observe. Dreading Lady Mainstown's return, to

escape her observation I proposed to go home. He accompanied me to my door where he bade me farewell. It afterwards appeared that our love-scene had not escaped observation and after d'Estonville's departure it was not without some doubt exaggerated, to her Ladyship alarmed at our attachment, or perhaps from some other excitement to amuse her idleness, wrote off to acquaint the McMiss that my being then residing near Richmond, at some motive, which I never could penetrate, tolled me to the highest degree, assuring him since I had quitted his protection I had, with certain knowledge, conducted myself with the greatest discretion. It is almost needless to say that I was kept in ignorance of this communication. It certainly was an after-thought of Ladyship's propriety, for while she found some convenience she had by her counsel upon the separation from the McMisserton.

"To return to myself. For some days after d'Estonville's departure, my spirits were in a tumult, I felt unequal to call on her Ladyship, satisfying myself by sending word that I was confined to my room by illness. After all professions of regard and friendship, she made cold inquiries. On the third evening, however, I resolved to go early, as I had some business."

ville might have written to her, for he did propose our corresponding; and though I wished it, the offer with any delicacy not have originated with me. Lady Main- received me with a great show of politeness. was ordered; and even while we sat at it, ived a letter which I knew to be from ville. Merely glancing at the direction, it into her reticule. Though burning with ice to learn its contents, I could not sum- rage to make a single inquiry; so after ing my stay as long as possible I had to come disappointed, inwardly condemning ville, who, by not writing, left me exposed e suspense and uncertainty of never hear- im."

CHAPTER XII.

“THREE weeks more passed on, and every day I lost favour with Lady Mainstown; the fact was, I could no longer minister to her pleasure. Anxiety and agitation choked my voice; when I attempted to sing, it became husky and unequal; and when she called for any air that d’Estonville admired, my fingers trembled over the keys; and as she really loved music, and had a just ear, this provoked her; then, spite of my efforts to appear cheerful, my thoughts wandered, and I grew absent and sad. In short, I was no longer calculated to play the dependant,—a position which demands the total subjugation of all one’s thoughts and feelings to the caprice or interests of others. You may be surprised, Freville, but the deference which, from vanity or ambition, we pay to rank, is just as humiliating as that to which poverty obliges us, and less excusable, because the calls of the latter are more imperative. However, I by no means regretted her Ladyship’s

ange of fancy ; and when she chose an exceedingly pretty girl of inferior rank and tolerably well educated as a companion, I felt rejoiced at her release, and, quick at expedients, resolved on the following month to go back to Ireland, seek the protection of Mr. La Franck, your preceptor, Treville, and my father's old friend, for I had heard that his daughter and her aunt were then residing with him. This, too, afforded the ardent wish for opportunity of writing to Mr. Eatonville. I should acquaint him with Lady Mainstown's having declined my company, which, though politely, she had done ; also to demand his approval of my plan of going to Ireland ; and in spite of my sex's reserve, which shrank from the idea of being the first to propose a correspondence, to entreat that he would occasionally write, if only to assure me of his safety. Having written this letter, I postponed sending it to Mr. La Franck's until the following Monday. It was then Tuesday ; but having resolved on my plans, my mind became more composed, consequently my voice and spirits returned, and Lady Mainstown, who found her new companion insipid and sulky, again finding me an acquisition, began to repeat the active measures she had, during her fit of spleen, adopted to get rid of me ; but, alas ! the caprice of this weak, trifling woman sealed my destiny.

"I said three weeks had elapsed since d'Estonville had quitted Richmond; two days since, I had forwarded my letters to him and Mr. La Franck; and with trembling hope, I expected his answer, when to my perfect horror I received a long epistle from the McMisserton, of whom I had ceased to think, or only remembered as a barrier to my perfect happiness. Freville, I wish that in my anger I had not torn to atoms the unwelcome scroll; for what with its quaint ideas, Scotch phrases and original style, it was well worthy of being preserved; and now my memory will not enable me to do justice to it. It began with a lament that Miss Rachel was very unwell, and told of the half-boiled parritch and over-seasoned haggis he in consequence got from the empty powdered gilpey who acted as cook; however, he expressed much hope of Miss Rachel's recovery, from her youth, fine constitution, and the healthsome air of the Highlands. Then he entered into a long lecture upon my running off with such a randle fool as McDuff Gower; but assuring me that, having ascertained we parted company in the city of Edinburgh, and that my true object in eloping from Glenlow Castle was to attend on my father, he, after due consideration on the justness of the act, granted his forgiveness, still gravely explaining how my first duty was to my husband. However, a mistake of duties in a winsome gipsy

was excusable, especially as I belonged to that
unsteady people, the Irish.

"Of my poor father, he spoke with great contempt
and resentment, at leaving me plackless; as of
course had I inherited wealth, it would be his
according to law; and he actually quoted different
acts of Parliament in support of this observation,
patiating on the extreme wisdom evinced in
propping as much as possible the wings of women,
by being generally feckless in wit, much given
to whimsies, and in all things changeable. He
then alluded to Lady Mainstown's letter; the high
character she had given of my prudence; com-
mended me for having settled near one of his kin,
which he in his folly, and no doubt after due con-
sideration, imputed to respect for himself, though,
good man! I never knew of their relationship until
long after I went to Richmond. After that, he
acquainted me that McDuff Gower, his nephew,
of the female line, and my quondam admirer, was
on the eve of being married to a Miss Margaret
Douglas, one of that ancient race, distinguished
by the cognomen of the red, on account of their
rotty-coloured hair. He then complained
bitterly, that for five hundred years none of
that branch of the Douglasses, or for the same
space of time of the Gowers, had been known to
be in issue, so there was no doubt but that in
the expectation of Glenlow Castle, and its broad

lands, his nephew would have sons, aye, and daughters too, in abundance. He concluded his letter—which filled twelve pages closely written in his stiff, upright characters—by saying he was then in bonny Edinburgh, on his way to Richmond, where he hoped to join me that day week; and having given me such due notice, he expected I would not delay him above a day or so, as he should be impatient to get back, to pay, as in justice he ought, all due attention to Miss Rachel, a duty in which he hoped soon to be assisted by my gentler cares;—and then in his prosy, quaint manner, he went on to prove that attendance on the sick was a woman's peculiar province, and should be her delight.

“I perused this letter with scorn towards the McMisserton, and indignation against Lady Mainstown. To return to Glenlow Castle and its hated master, even if I had possessed sufficient principle—which in truth I did not to make the attempt—was then impossible. True, in the illusions of my empty vanity, I had conquered, or rather subdued my natural antipathy to a man who, independent of the vast disparity of our ages, was in every respect abhorrent to my feelings, but a sentiment more powerful than vanity or ambition now mastered me. Wherever genuine love is felt, every other passion fades before its

influence ; and while d'Estonville engrossed my whole being, the proudest, the most endowed, might have bowed before me, only inspiring aversion, or at best indifference.

“ Prompt to act, my plans were quickly formed. On the following day I would set off for London, without bidding adieu to Lady Mainstown, who had acted so ungenerously ; I would write also to the McMisserton privately ; arrived in town I would seek a parting interview with d'Estonville, and then without even waiting for Mr. La Franck's expected answer, proceed to Ireland. Under such excitement I could find no rest, so the night was devoted to preparations for my final departure from Richmond ; my only uneasiness arising from apprehension lest d'Estonville might have joined his corps in Manchester. The idea of not again seeing him was agonising ; I knew Sir Horace had left town, for I saw it announced in the Times ; as to the McMisserton, strong in my purpose of never again living with him, I felt no apprehension about him.

“ I travelled in one of the public vehicles, and stopped at the Bath Hotel, as I knew Sir Horace's town residence was in its neighbourhood. I then wrote a few studied lines to d'Estonville, acquainting him with my arrival, being, as I said, on my way to Cork, and that having no friend or attendant with me, I would trespass on his

kindness so far as to request he would send his servant to engage my passage, &c. &c. for the day but one following. Not one word of wishing to see him, for as yet I had not laid aside the modesty and dignity of my sex. My agitation after dispatching this note was so violent, that the beating of my heart seemed audible, and I thought it would escape from my bosom, as I reflected that perhaps d'Estonville was gone; perhaps influenced by his high moral principles, would shun my society. These dreads led to such self-abandonment, that I used no efforts to guard against the danger that might attend our meeting. I was not long left to surmise. Ere I could have expected an answer, d'Estonville arrived, looking so brilliantly happy at seeing me. Without reserve I laid before him the circumstances of Lady Mainstown's treachery, my antipathy to the McMisserton, and resolve never again to live with him. He made some faint efforts to press me to return to Glenlow Castle, but I received them with tears and reproaches; these affected him, and he changed the subject.

"When more composed, we spoke of our approaching separation, and having once confessed our mutual attachment, all future reserve on that subject was over. He promised to assist me in going about some small purchases I wished to make, and also to see everything arranged for my

re, and to put me on board : then we settled our future correspondence, and this was our consolation. When we came to take leave, created that I would postpone my departure couple of days, as the probability of our meeting was at best uncertain ; besides he l, 'it will give you time to hear from Mrs. anck, and believe me you will feel more stable in being an expected guest.' To this Ily consented, persuading myself of its pro-

The two days passed, and with them the f separation increased, and then we agreed should continue still another week. In the lace I had not heard from Mrs. La Franck, the next, by our both setting off the same our separate journies, the pang would be d by the excitement of travelling. At first ated, for I felt my position awkward, but o one knew of my being in London ; besides ed ungracious to refuse d'Estonville, for ort week which would fly so rapidly, and I ted.

eville, let me pass over some days without ; then a shade was flung over us by the aserton, who on arriving at Richmond, and that to avoid him I had fled, directed by rice and machinations of Lady Mainstown, in pursuit of me ; and as I had taken no o conceal my folly, he soon traced me to

the Bath Hotel. To do him justice, he was far too honourable, once having heard of the step I had taken, to seek an interview, on the contrary he eschewed the very thought; but stimulated by Lady Mainstown, by jealousy, and by avarice, he sued for damages against d'Estonville; and here, though the suit was not decided for many months subsequently, I may as well mention its result. The McMisserton was cast. True, d'Estonville would have submitted to any distress sooner than give publicity to the circumstances; but strange to say, McDuff Gower of his own accord quitted his bride and appeared in the court to give evidence of the ungenerous manner in which I had been treated at Glenlow Castle; the despotism Miss Rachel practised over me; the stern prejudices imbibed by the Highland clan, and which endangered my life; the miserly conduct of the McMisserton in depriving me even of an attendant; and his cruelty in refusing to let me visit my dying parent. To all these truths, were added exaggerated praises of my good temper, cheerfulness and playful submission, until driven to despair by the report of my father's illness, when guided by affection I eloped to tend on him in prison; his death proving how necessary were my cares.

"No doubt the McMisserton's counsel, one way or another, would have set aside all this;

but the uncompromising truth of the General broke in on their sophistry. Interrupting them, he boldly admitted the facts, merely stating his own quaint reasons for so acting ; finally he was cast with sixpence costs, and a sharp rebuke for not treating his wife with more tenderness and indulgence. Sad and discomfited he returned to his Highland home, rendered more solitary by the death of Miss Rachel, who had been gathered to her ancient race. The bitterness of his spirit increased by knowing that his long-collected wealth must ultimately fall to ' sic a claivering ninny as McDuff Gower, who betrayed kith and kin to fletcher a false jillet ;' and after due consideration, he was obliged to admit that the legislation of England, which heretofore he had upheld as superior to that of any other people or country, was defective in justice. All this time he had not candour to reflect that his grievances originated in his own folly. To return to myself, I quitted the Bath Hotel, and with d'Estonville removed to Manchester, but not to his quarters. He hired for me a pretty cottage in the vicinity, about a mile and a half from the town, and as my trial was going on, and I could not endure to be seen, I lived in close retirement. Of course, before this period Sir Horace Howard must have heard of the whole distressing affair ; but not suspecting that I continued with d'Estonville,

judged it more prudent to affect ignorance; however, this is a mere supposition for which I have no authority.

“ Although d’Estonville’s love, if possible, exceeded mine, still its effects were not so fortunate, for his thoughts were divided between me and his father, to whom his filial attachment almost amounted to veneration; while towards me he experienced not only all the ardour of youthful love, but the honourable feeling, on which his high, manly nature refined, of affording ever protection to the woman, who for his sake he forfeited her claims on society. Thus he treated me with a tenderness and delicacy exceeding that which he would have thought necessary, had I been his wife; and to prove the depth of affection and as rewards for the sacrifices I made, he constantly purchased for me the splendid gifts—far beyond what his income could afford—for Sir Horace was by no means wealthy and, moreover, a very close man. Thus d’Estonville had little command of money. In every respect, nothing could be more inexcusable in my conduct. From unreflecting levity and delight I experienced on receiving proofs of affection—although one smile of approbation or pressure of my hand as I did something conveyed to me more sincere pleasure than the gems the glorious East ever produced.

I made no effort to check his extravagance. Freville, I dwell upon this, for his involvements, united to other circumstances, subsequently assisted towards my degradation.

“We had been but three months in Manchester, when d’Estonville’s corps received orders to join the forces under Lord Wellington. It was late in June when we reached Spain. Removed from England and his father, the secrecy which he had before observed with regard to me, was cast aside. One circumstance alone checked his happiness : the McMisserton had not sought for a divorce ; thus he could not raise me to the position of his wife.

“Freville, pass we over till the battle of Salamanca ; one of the most desperate ever fought, and I may add one of the most glorious victories ever gained by the gallant and immortal Wellington—at least such it appeared to me, for there the heroic d’Estonville, who belonged to the cavalry under Sir Stapleton Cotton, gained his first laurels, and returned unwounded to satisfy all my doubts and hopes. Oh, Freville ! after hours of such agonizing fears as the sterner heart of man cannot even conceive, after for a day and night hovering about the scene of death like a troubled spirit, resolved, if d’Estonville fell, to rush into the very din of the battle, and amidst the roar of cannon terminate my then wretched existence ; how

think you did I receive this great mercy? Not by prayer and thanksgiving, for I had become a reckless, sinful being. All the pious thoughts of my youth, associated as they were with my poor mother's memory, were quickly fading from my soul, and when my hero, my idol returned to me once more, I prostrated myself at his feet, kissed the very ground he trod on; and if I deluged it with tears, they were the overflowings of joy, not of gratitude or penitence to an offended God.

"You are aware that the capture of Madrid soon followed the conquest of Salamanca. Thither, in a few days, I accompanied d'Esturville, whose tenderness was, if possible, increased by the sensibility I had displayed for his danger; and now indeed all the imaginings of my youth seemed realised; those wild fancies which my mother early in life observing, and from her quiet good sense and reflecting temper foreseeing the errors to which they might lead, had taken such righteous pains to conquer, or at least to implant in my mind principles of religion which would regulate their indulgence. How fruitless her cares proved, it is needless now to say; moreover, to you, Freville, who by your vivid description of Cadiz, your tales of superstition, wild legends of the past, and anticipated adventures for the future, so helped to nourish my craving after the marvellous.

“ And now I was in Madrid, the proud residence of Castile’s proud kings ; and though the days of her chivalry and greatness had passed away, still in the pomp and gloom of her religion, her mystic laws, her numerous monasteries and convents, the magnificence of her royal palaces, and the graceful costume of her exquisitely-formed daughters, enough remained to satisfy and increase my love of the romantic ; while all received interest and effect from the crowds of heroes and foreign soldiers who crowded her streets, intermingling the harsh tramp of war with love’s soft serenade. And d’Estonville Howard was at my side ; his gallant, manly spirit, subservient to my will, obeyed my lightest caprice. Sometimes he accompanied me to the Manzanares, and as we strayed down its classic banks, charmed by my every folly, would delight in hearing me, whose memory is well stored with ancient lore, relate some chronicle of the past, or sing some warlike ballad ; at others we would ride forth through groves of olives and oranges, or where the vine’s tender tendrils, clinging to all of strength for support, scattered their luscious clusters around. Above us shone the heavens, clothed in the south’s glowing light ; beneath our feet sprang innumerable flowers, perfuming the air ; all was a scene of exquisite harmony : the very embodying of a poet’s dream.

"My spirit became so exalted, that though war, and desolation, and sickness, and death reigned around, in the concentration of my idolatry, I felt not for others. I dreaded no ill to d'Estonville—no, not even when I learned that preparations were being made for the siege of Burgos—for my love shed the halo of immortality around him; never did the infatuated Hindes more sincerely worship her Juggernaut. D'Estonville partook not of my hopes, guessed not the charmed life with which my idolatry endowed him; far from it, he was perfectly alive to all the dangers that might attend the approaching struggle; and though his brave heart could boldly encounter the strife, his better principles shrank from being 'cut off in the very flower of his sin.'

"These feelings of compunction were aggravated by a knowledge of having incurred debts which he had no immediate means of paying; and this to one so just and honourable was in itself sufficiently depressing; but a deeper grief preyed on his spirit. He had received a letter of remonstrance from his father, representing the disgrace and evil consequences of his attachment to me, and the certain demoralization to which it must lead. In affecting language, Sir Howard dwelt upon the tenderness with which from infancy he had treated him, never, for his sake, forming a second alliance, and

offering, if he immediately separated from me, to liquidate all his debts ; also to grant him means of providing for me. In conclusion, he said, 'D'Estonville, if you refuse this, my just request, from henceforth I renounce you ; and bear in mind, whether in a distant land, exposed to the havocs of war, or the more insidious attacks of disease, that while you live with this creature, who, in defiance of every tie human or divine, fled from her husband's home, you bear no father's blessing to shield or support you ; and this I call my God to witness.'

"Too generous to separate from me, and far too refined and sensitive to mention Sir Horace's stern purpose, d'Estonville kept me in ignorance. This was most unfortunate, for the same unreflecting vivacity which often impelled me to rush into error, would have exalted me above every selfish consideration ; and desperate as must have been the struggle, I would have fled sooner than see him gradually sinking under the consciousness of a father's displeasure. But perfectly unsuspecting, I strove to cheer him by a greater assumption of gaiety, rallying him on his fears ; and when he gravely answered that he did not deny having a presentiment of not escaping the siege, so far did my imagination lead, that I perfectly ridiculed the idea. You will smile, Freville,

when you read this, but enthusiasm is a species of insanity, and mine had taken the highest flight.

“ Unhappily, most unhappily, d’Estonville mistook my levity for want of feeling, and comparing it to the sensibility I had shown previous to the battle of Salamanca, came to the rapid and unjust conclusion that my love for him was on the wane, and that I viewed his approaching danger almost with indifference; and this idea, after the sacrifice of filial duty he was making for me, almost distracted him, and I fear rendered him reckless and unguarded. It was not till, disenchanted by despair, that I acquired a knowledge of these facts—I should say thoughts—and then it served no purpose but to add poignancy to a grief such as, I trust, few are doomed to suffer.

CHAPTER XI.

ACCOMPANIED d'Estonville to the neighborhood of Burgos, though he pressed me to stay in Madrid. His doing so awoke the first emotion I had known since we were intimate (save as connected with the war), for I thought I had freed from indifference. Thus, while we mutually adored each other, we admitted secret dislikes. Mine soon vanished, but his temper grew fiercer, more suspicious, and less ingenuous; though he daily saw me submit to privations and dangers for which my sex was unfitted, he did not lose his suspicion that the ardour of my passions was fled, and were he to perish, that his death would not so deeply afflict me. Now that death had taken possession of his mind, he read every word and look of mine into some meaning to support it, until it became a canker heart.

How surely in the variety of human misery is not a sharper pang than to believe the

love which was once solely ours, and on whose consistency we built our earthly hopes, is rapidly fading, while by one of the mysteries of our nature we cannot sever the link that unites us to the chosen object.

“ I should have mentioned, that shortly before I quitted Madrid, I had the good fortune to meet my former attendant, Ellen Mulcahy. You may remember she lived with me at Glanmire, and afterwards in London, and it was through her brother Pat, who at the period of Lord Chancellor’s business was footman to Lord Beletrieve, that I acquired a knowledge of his Lordship’s secrets.

“ To speak of Ellen. Sincerely attached to me, she adhered to our fallen fortunes, and accompanied my father and myself to Scotland, and on my marriage with the McMisserton, I brought her to Glenlow Castle ; but Miss Rachel, provoked at her not admiring Scotch provisions, had her sent off, and the General refused me another attendant in her place. After that Ellen married a corporal, and went abroad, and I lost sight of her ; but happening to be quartered in Madrid, and—as she afterwards acquainted me—hearing who I was, and with whom, she sought me out, and, though by no means shocked at my position, had the good taste to make no remark upon it. On the following day she came to my

lodgings. I received her with sincere pleasure, and offered to take her into my service; but she declined, as she could not quit her husband and children. The former, d'Estonville soon after promoted to the rank of serjeant; this excited her gratitude, and few mornings passed without her calling to tender me some attention, and spite of the apprehended danger, on my account, she regretted that her husband did not belong to the troops ordered for Burgos.

Whether to win back my affection, which mistakenly he supposed to be wavering; or to disguise his innate uneasiness, I know not, but d'Estonville's manners again became all tenderness and assiduity; this delighted me and kept up my delusive hopes.

"I shall pass over the preparations for the siege; (to those connected with them they were so absorbing as to swallow up every other consideration) and come at once to its results. D'Estonville was appointed to some command—I think under General Pack—but I am not positive, for the anxiety of that period was such as to confuse my memory relative to all events, save one too terrible to be forgotten. Freville, I must hasten over this part of my sad tale; accordingly I shall not enter into any particulars of the siege. From the instant the storming the fortifications on Saint Michael's Hill commenced, my courage

failed; still, in my mistaken view of encouraging d'Estonville, I preserved my appearance of gaiety. He was with me on the 10th of October, and remained that night, but told me that he should lead on his troop early the following morning, and that a mine was to be sprung. We dined together, and our meal passed off cheerfully. He arose soon after, saying he had letters to write. I entreated to accompany him to his room, for it was my wont to sit by his side when he was employed. With tenderness, but fixed determination he declined, promising not to delay. Two hours might have elapsed, when he again joined me. I observed that he looked unusually pale and sad, and there was a flash about his eyelids as if he had been weeping. I know not what folly, what madness tempted me, but with bad taste, I rallied him about it. He seemed surprised and agitated—then in a voice of mixed sorrow and anger, gravely replied: 'Aigline, I should rejoice in the want of sensibility, which if I should fall, as is at least probable, will prevent you from regretting me too deeply; yet,' he continued with a forced smile, 'it speaks little for my powers of pleasing, when a love, for which I have sacrificed so much, has proved so evanescent.'

"Shocked beyond measure, I was going to explain the true state of my feelings, when some

icers came in on military business ; consequently retired, and it was late ere d'Estonville joined . He looked fatigued, but with my usual cour, I was commencing my explanation, when quickly said :

‘ Not now, Aigline, not now : I would, if able obtain a few hours’ rest to recruit myself to-morrow’s hard work. Should I escape, can talk at leisure ; if not, it is of little consequence.’ So saying, he hurried into bed, and closing his eyes affected to sleep, and soon after so in reality.

I had no intention of seeking rest. First, I changed all his dress, that in the morning he should have no unnecessary delay, and thus might better enjoy his repose ; then placing the night cap, so that I might gaze on him without the light flashing on his eyelids, I sat by his couch, pressed his hand between mine, and divided the hair from his high forehead to which I every now and then pressed my trembling lips. As the hour of peril approached, my sanguine hopes lessened, and in an agony of dread I knelt by his side fervently prayed for his preservation in danger ; not one orison in my impiety did I utter for future happiness. And so the night waned, the autumnal morning rose with all its awful variations, and the din of battle sounded around, thousands, who never again hailed the sun’s

rising, sprang gaily from their rest, to join in the inhuman strife of a criminal ambition. All this I witnessed, and I leant over the couch, and in whispering accents, said :

“ ‘ D’Estonville, my only life, rise.’ ”

“ He started up exclaiming : ‘ Ah ! is it you, Aigline, and not in bed all night ! how is this ; I must be angry.’ ”

“ I answered caressingly ; ‘ Though you accuse me of not loving you, I could not rest on the eve of your danger.’ He pressed me passionately to his breast, then looking from the window exclaimed :

“ ‘ I must be quick ! not a moment to spare.’ ”

“ I assisted him to put on his dress, now and then pausing to admire its trappings. Yes, it was my voice awoke him ;—it was my hands adorned him for the sacrifice. I deserved to be punished, and the curse has fallen heavy on my soul.

“ We heard the tramping of his charger as it stood at the door. Again he gave me a wild embrace, exclaiming :

“ ‘ Aigline, I must be off !’ ”

“ Already with a bound he had cleared the stairs. I rushed after him ;—at the door he turned, saying :

“ ‘ No tears, no tears, you must not unman me.’ ”

“ I dashed them away, and smiled in his face :

ay for me, Aigline,' he exclaimed emphatically.

In the midst of my tears I answered : 'The
of the wicked are of no avail.'

I saw him shudder and grow ghastly pale, as
anfully rejoined :

'I will; then I go to the field of battle un-
armed by a single blessing !'

On these words, and ere I could reply,
stepping on his horse, which tossing its flow-
er, impatient of delay, sprang rapidly
—a moment, and it was lost to my view.

When d'Estonville vanished my confidence,
the way to all a timid and devoted woman's
visions. Oh ! for oblivion of that day of
as running frantically along I heard the
charge of the musquetry, and the cannon's
roar ; and more fearful still, the rushing
of the springing mine, followed by the
loud crash of the falling battlements ;—and
Howard was exposed to all.

Towards evening my suspense rose to such a
height that at every risk I resolved to obtain
relief. With a promptitude and desperation
unfailing in despair, I returned to our quarters,
parted my hair, fastening on my head a helmet,
being too small for him, d'Estonville had
been, disguised my woman's dress under a
surtout, and over all threw a large mili-

tary cloak; and then I went to the stable where one of d'Estonville's chargers, in the event of being required, was kept in readiness. It was a high-spirited animal which many of the troop would have hesitated to ride; but in my absorbing anxiety every thought of self was forgotten. In a moment, assisted by an old groom, who stupified by tobacco and terror, never commented on the strangeness of my conduct, I changed its saddle for a side one, and sprang on its back; while my cloak falling over, completely disguised my person. Scarcely conscious of my weight, and snuffing the battle with a loud neigh, it bore me rapidly forward to the scene of carnage.

"It might be, I suppose, about two hours, perhaps more or less, after the breaches had been effected, that, borne by my wild steed, I was carried into the very front of the danger. It appeared that some of the British troops had actually entered the works; but, the incensed and undaunted garrison, with a courage fully equal to their resolute assailants, poured forth such a heavy and constant fire, as obliged the besiegers to retreat; and this, spite of their gallantry and discipline, created much confusion in their ranks. By what means, as I dashed through every danger or impediment, I escaped, it would be impossible to determine; but I seemed to bear the charmed life which I had imputed to my less fortunate

At length, my loosened helmet fell to the ground, and my long hair, unbound from its content, floated around, and for the first time I commanded observation. It was but cursory, that stirring scene events which at another time I must have awakened curiosity, were understood; and on I went till I actually stood within the breaches, and above me was placed a piece of ordnance, surrounded by French soldiers. Whether from exhaustion or terror, I know not, but I felt the war-horse quiver in limb. This roused me for the first time to the sense of my personal danger. At that instant, my arm grasped; turning round, I beheld an officer of dragoons, who, ere I could speak, exclaimed:—

Merciful Heaven! then I was not mistaken. Indeed, Mrs. Mc Misserton I see!

As he addressed me I recognised in him James Gower, my guide from Glenlow Castle, no longer an overgrown gawky youth, but a fine-looking soldier, his tall stature, yellow hair, and blue eyes, bespeaking his Celtic origin.

Oh, Mc Duff Gower,' I cried, 'blessed be the providence that has led you to my side. D'Eston-Howard is engaged in this terrible battle. Quickly lead me to his side, and for that good may the angels of heaven shield you in this time of danger.'

“‘My dear lady,’ he replied, ‘this is no place for your gentler nature. At all risks I must convey you away,’ and he grasped my horse’s reins.

“‘Never,’ I interrupted, ‘till I see d’Estonville. A thousand deaths to myself were preferable to the very apprehension of his danger.’

“I paused, for at the instant the great gun was discharged; its fiery balls bounded over us, and for some instants the stunning noise and sulphurous smoke overcame me. Perfectly collected, Mc Duff had dragged my horse under the shelter of a bastion, and, again addressing me, he said:

“‘Mrs. McMisserton, believe me our late escape has been most providential—I may say, miraculous; but if we remain here, probably the next discharge will destroy us both. Take courage, then, and as I ride forward keep to my side. Your steed, weakened and exhausted, will now obey your hand.’

“I answered with childish vehemence, ‘Never will I quit this field alive till I see d’Estonville Howard. Think you the sentiment which brought me to it is so weak as to yield to personal fear? Judge more truly, Mc Duff, and, remember, that excess of love is the sole excuse for as it is likely to prove the punishment of my crime. But risk not your life, your honour, by remaining at my side. Go to your place; and for your kind-

is to me, may God grant you the blessing I
ve forfeited ;' and I burst into a passion of
tears.

" 'It were a poltroon's part from any cause to
port a woman in such extremity,' exclaimed the
ble Scot ; 'least of all, you, Aigline, whom to
tect from danger I would almost risk a sol-
der's honour.'

He paused, and then in a voice choked with
emotion, continued :

'Your position requires that I should be
did ; yet when I witness these tears, this union
your sex's tenderness, with man's desperate
dution, how can I bring myself to acknow-
e the fatal truth, that your search after Cap-

Howard is vain ! One of the first to enter
works, he fell :—let his bravery, his honour-
death console you. Merciful Heaven, sup-
; her !'

I heard no more : I uttered a fearful cry ; my
ified horse reared, and would have dashed my
less form to the earth, but McDuff Gower
sprung from his, and by catching me in his
s saved me. Oh ! why did he not let me
sh ! Why preserve my wretched existence
accumulated disgrace and suffering ? Freville,
I have related, from my entering the field
urred within the space of a few moments : for

subsequent events my mind was confused. I remember sternly refusing to believe that d'Estonville was dead. I persisted that he *could not die*; and then I struggled not to quit the brush till my reason was convinced by seeing his remains. At first, McDuff Gower attempted to persuade, then he strove to force me away; but the whole British army could not have torn me from my search. At length, overcome by my entreaties, he led me to the very spot where the fortifications had been first stormed, and there, amidst rubbish, huddled together with one or two more bodies, lay—Heaven! surely this was not the manly form of d'Estonville Howard, so lately my heart's idol! From the very depths of my agony, I acquired composure. I knelt by its side, and, with stern resolution, began my fearful examination:—a bracelet of my hair—it was my first gift—encircled the shattered wrist. I tore open the breast of the shirt, it was marked and crested by my own hands; again—but it is needless to say—there was no mistaking. Oh, God! and yet I lived. I dashed myself on the lifeless body, clasping it to my bosom of life and love; but nature usurped her rights, and with shrieks of despair, I sprang from the breathless clay: rushing forward, I stumbled over some heap, and was stunned by the fall. It seems McDuff had

followed; a musket-shot grazed his neck, and bounding upwards, lacerated his ear, but the gallant Scot winced not. Taking the helmet from his head, he placed it on mine. At that instant, his commanding officer, who had collected the troops, and was leading them on to the onslaught, called him loudly to his station: there was no alternative but military dishonour, so, consigning me to the care of a soldier, with the promise of a large reward if he conducted me back in safety, he galloped to his corps, and resumed his place. Kind McDuff!—scion of an ancient race, of the boasted ancestry of the McMisserton, never did more warlike or generous spirit inherit the road lands of Glenlow Castle, or better grace the noble house of Gower.

“By what means I was borne back to my dings, I know not, for I long remained insensible; but when my faculties were restored, I found myself lying on the couch from which Estonville, in youth and health, had so lately risen. I thought on this, and tried to weep, and bring back the memory of his love and tenderness; but it would not be. No tear cooled my scorching eyes, and, in place of his manly form, the pierced and breathless body that lay beneath the fortifications of Saint Michael’s Hill, came to my view. Shrieking with horror, I called

for lights to banish the fearful phantom; but still it was there. I extinguished the candles, and sought profound darkness; but it mattered not, the impress was on my spirit, and wherever I turned it rose before me. Oh, Heaven! it was very fearful; and I strove, by looking at his clothes, and the numerous gifts he had presented to me, and the little study where he was wont to sit, to turn the tide of horror into that of grief; but my efforts failed, and for two nights my sufferings were such as, to our human apprehension, can hardly be exceeded by the torments of those doomed to eternal woe. Another night, in time, rolled on: but ages of misery passed over my soul. I lay prostrate on the ground with a shawl wrapped round my face. I could not endure the light of Heaven, or that any body should see me. I was conscious of nothing, but that voices occasionally broke on my ear. I had been offered food, but with cries I dashed it away; for, at that moment, the terrible apparition seemed to stand before me. During all this, no pains were taken to soothe or support me: none felt any interest in my fate; and except where sincere attachment existed in the excitement of the war, individual suffering awakened no sympathy. Towards the third morning, I was seized with a consuming thirst, and none were near me.

so I rose, and staggering from weakness, looked around for some liquid: a flask of wine met my view. I took a deep draught, and again sank on the ground. It acted on my frame, weakened by suffering and hunger, as an anodyne, and I sank into a heavy sleep, which lasted for eight and twenty hours. I awoke unrefreshed; my heavy moans attracted a Spanish woman who was in my service; she raised my head, with some kindness offering me bread and milk. I could not eat; but my thirst continued, so I drank freely of the latter. The Spaniard soon retired; a profound silence reigned around; no words can do justice to my desolation, and, unhappily, my mind was quite restored to an entire and dreadful consciousness.

“As the night closed in, thoughts of my endless grief pressed on my soul, and again the bleeding image of d’Estonville rose to my view. I could not endure such repeated horrors; I called loudly to the woman, but she was gone. I rang the bell with violence, but none were within hearing. Some event had drawn all from the house, and I remained in perfect solitude. To escape from myself, I flew from chamber to chamber. At length I entered one where a table was laid out with refreshments. I remembered the dreamless slumber of the past day, and I grasped a goblet full of wine and drank it off.

Had it been poison, to banish memory, I had done the same. It circulated through my veins like fire. With unsteadfast steps I reached my apartment, and sank on the couch in an insensible state.

CHAPTER XII.

"FREVILLE, I have since learned that scarcely had Sir Horace Howard despatched his letter to d'Estonville, than, repenting its contents, he resolved to proceed to Madrid, and try by gentle means to wean him from me. By what route he resumed his journey I know not, but it must have been a tedious one; for, on arriving in Madrid, I found his son had proceeded to the siege, and either without loss of time he followed, but did not reach Burgos until the twelfth of October, a very day after d'Estonville's fall, and though pains were taken to break the sad intelligence, it nearly deprived him of his reason. Happily he could not see the sad remains, for by the directions of the commanding officer, they had been already coffined.

It was not until the fifteenth that Sir Horace was sufficiently composed to enter into any particulars; he was then presented with a letter, which, in the event of his death, d'Estonville had

left with his colonel to be presented to him. The perusal of this affected him so violently, that medical assistance was found requisite; however, on the following day he entered into several inquiries relative to me—my beauty, my accomplishments, my devoted attachment to his lamented son; and (except in the one article of my guilt) the strict propriety of my conduct were extolled. This evidently pleased Sir Horace, and he resolved to visit me, saying that his departed son had solemnly commended me to his care. It must have been a severe trial to the bereaved and honourable father to meet in kindness the woman who, as he conceived, had led his child into error; but, softened by affliction, I have every reason to suppose that at the period he sincerely commiserated my sufferings, and anticipated some consolation in obeying poor d'Estonville's request. As Sir Horace continued very weak and ill, two or three officers of rank, his particular friends, insisted on accompanying him, on what they justly termed his painful duty; accordingly they proceeded to the house where I lodged.

“ Well, Freville, as I have frequently remarked, the tide of circumstances has always run against me; thus on the evening of Sir Horace's visit, the people of the house chanced to have a carousal, and the first sounds that met his ear were those

of dissolute merriment. Shrinking from a scene which seemed a mockery of his woe, he hastily inquired after me, and with his friends, was shown up to my immediate suite of apartments : passing on he entered my sleeping room.

“ Oh, Freville, how can I proceed to relate my shame, my disgrace,—think of the surprise, the horror of the high-minded, refined, fastidious Sir Horace when, advancing towards the couch, he saw me, not in tears, and mourning for his departed son, but lying in a stupor too evidently caused by wine.

“ On discovering me in such a state, the conjecture never once entered his mind, that my over-wrought spirits, and my mental agony had superinduced a delirium, which could not calculate, or was for the moment careless of consequences. No, he at once concluded that the revel below stairs, which he had the moment before witnessed, was at least suffered by me. Shuddering at the idea, he naturally groaned aloud, and would have fallen back, had not the officers supported him ; while I, seeing their uniform, and forgetting my despair, fancied d'Estonville returned, and made an effort to rise, to reach out my hand to welcome him with tenderness,—and then a dizziness seized me, and I fell back with an hysterical laugh. One word had been sufficient to explain, and to acquit me of this, in a

woman, the greatest of degradations; but I was unconscious of what was passing, and no friend was near to take my part. Even had Sir Horace learned of my rushing to the siege in quest of his son, he might have imputed the act to its true cause, desperation, but in all things, be they great or small, from the period of my mother's death, my evil destiny prevailed, and hurried me on to destruction.

"After gazing at me for some time with mixed pity and contempt, Sir Horace said: 'Gentlemen, this is a shocking spectacle of youthful depravity, but it is not without its use;' clapping his hands together, he continued, 'an All-wise being has been most merciful: better, a thousand times better, that my misguided son should have died a hero's death than have lived to be the companion of this wretched creature. Alas! d'Estonville,' he sighed, 'how passion must have corrupted thy whole moral nature, when thou couldst sacrifice thy interests, thy father, thy principles to such a being. Almighty God! in thy goodness, accept his early death as a peace-offering for his sin!'

"So saying, he retired with his friends. Soon was the tale bruited abroad, and the praises that shortly before had been lavished on me were recalled. Some few (oh, why are their number so few) regretted that one possessed of so many

natural advantages, should have sunk so low ; but the generality were amused at the scandal, thought it excellent sport, wished they had 'been there to see' and so forth ; but, good or bad, not one paused to analyze the cause, to consider the despair that led me on, or to remember from my former habits, how little, in the possession of my reason, I was likely to commit myself in such a manner.

" Next morning, although still very weak and ill, I was sufficiently recovered to arise from my couch, and from the people of the house I learned of Sir Horace's visit, and they had picked up enough of his conversation, to know that he had departed in agitation and disgust. This roused in me a new sentiment. I was covered with shame, I was distracted that d'Estonville's father should think me worse than I really was. I felt I owed it to his memory to defend myself, to prove that though misguided, his son had not been so wholly lost, as to waste his affections upon a woman, such as I had appeared, and by this time, no doubt, had been represented to be. My sense of disgrace and mortification were so keen, that it softened my nature, and for the first time since d'Estonville's death, I wept convulsively—it was a great relief to my breaking heart.

" I now clothed myself in the deepest mourn-

ing, and though scarcely able to stand, and looking perfectly wretched from my long fast, supported by the Spanish woman, I approached Sir Horace Howard's residence. How was I received? He refused to see me; his attendants showed their ridicule and scorn openly. Can I proceed in this ignominious narrative?—Ha! my father, where was your pride in your beautiful Aigline then? Could you rest in your tomb, while the daughter of your love was so spoken of?

“ Oh, Freville Deerhurst! I have related—I have brought, I have bound myself to relate this circumstance in my life, which at the time filled me with shame and confusion; but which now I regard with loathing and horror. That I have told you this is no mark of my confidence; it is an assurance of my remorse. It is a proof of the persuasion that fills my whole soul, that guilt first conceived in folly, of itself leads, or is led by fate or necessity to the follies, which in their turn result in further and deeper guilt.

“ I tell you, Freville, there is no mercy, no charity to be found. In the troubled waters of this punished world, they could find no resting place, so they have fled to Heaven, to the Redeemer, and their space is filled with mocking, gibing demons, triumphing, rejoicing, gloating over human misery. Were it otherwise, could men so

readily build their evanescent enjoyment on the destruction of their own species? Think of the thousands, the tens of thousands, who have sent forth the loud wail of sorrow over this destructive war, think of the hearths made desolate, think of the bereaved parents, countless widows and orphans left to struggle alone on their sad pilgrimage, not a thought wasted on their woe. No, every idea is absorbed in expected conquest; the ensanguined wreath of victory is the high mark at which kings and heroes aim. With such an object in view the million may perish; enough will yet be found to grace pride's pageant; and this is a nation's glory. Oh, Heaven! why does your vengeance slumber? But I wander from my story. Freville, you condemn my vivacity, but my own afflictions have taught me to comprehend and mourn over those of others; besides during my stay in the Peninsula, there was scarcely a day that I did not witness, or hear of some fatal result of the campaign. To return to myself: no figure could convey to your mind my destitution at that period; shunned and despised, I literally stood alone in the world—not so, Sir Horace. Even amidst the public agitation—then increased by the accounts received that Soult was hastening from the South, for the purpose of forming a junction with the northern army, an intelligence so startling that Lord Wellington resolved to raise

the siege and retire to the Douro—Sir Horace was commiserated, and the officers of his son's regiment strove to show their respect for the departed by paying him every attention. Not so, to me; I had no legal claim to pity—but I linger too long over these heart-rending scenes; let me then be brief. Sir Horace with his son's remains left for England, and a few days after, in spite of the superior force which on all sides surrounded him, Lord Wellington and his army retreated from Burgos in the finest order, and proceeded towards the frontiers of Portugal. This piece of masterly generalship elicited such admiration that for a long time nothing else was spoken of; amidst such stirring events it were folly to suppose an individual could awaken interest; certainly for me there was none.

“ It might be the third day after Sir Horace's departure, that I received the following letter from one of the old officers who had accompanied him to my apartment: from its style he must have imbibed a strong prejudice against me.

“ ‘ Madam,

“ ‘ On my very esteemed friend, Sir Horace Howard quitting this for England, he requested me to acquaint you that, in compliance with an entreaty contained in a letter from his son, Captain d'Estonville Howard, of the — cavalry,

and which letter was written on the evening of the tenth of October, one thousand eight hundred and twelve, the very one previous to his gallant conduct and glorious death, which, as you, Madam, must be aware, took place at the siege of Burgos, on the eleventh of the same month—that he would make such provision as would enable you, Madam, to live in future, after a quiet respectable manner; my esteemed friend, Sir Horace, forthwith empowered me to communicate, that from henceforward he shall grant you the ample allowance of two hundred a year, to be paid quarterly at the house of Drummond and Co.; and for this, Madam, he requires no thanks, as he acts in compliance with the wishes of an only and departed child, not from any respect for, or approval of your conduct; and he expects that you will not teach him to regret his kindness by presuming to address him on the subject.

Madam, I remain,

Yours,

BENJAMIN SIMPSON OLDLEY.

Colonel of the ——'

“ ‘ P.S.—Madam, although in making the above communication to me, my esteemed friend Sir Horace Howard was too much agitated to be particular—indeed could scarcely express himself to be perfectly understood—still I opine that his grant of the two hundred a year is but an annuity; conse-

quently, Madam, in the event of your death, advise that you do not bequeath it to your family, as it might lead to litigation.'

"In a happier mood I must have smiled at the quaint, affected, business-like style of the old Colonel; but at that time I could only weep over this fresh proof of d'Estonville's love. It seemed as if even from the grave he strove to support, to shield me; also by proving that any anger he experienced from the mistaken view of my levity had passed away, it poured the first balm of consolation into my broken heart. As I again read the letter, although I knew its harshness could not have been dictated by Sir Horace, who was a perfect gentleman, still I considered how painful it must be to him to provide for the woman who had led his son into error, and who, he had reason to suppose, was utterly abandoned. Then he was reported to be avaricious, and the parting of even a small annuity out of his property might increase his uneasiness, so as a calculating spirit of self-interest certainly formed no part of my character, I hastily resolved not to accept the gift, and without further consideration sent the following answer:

" ' Sir.

" ' Yesterday evening I received your note communicating Sir Horace Howard's intention of granting me an annuity of two hundred a year.

Unfortunate as I am, I feel that any expression of thanks or gratitude on my part might be considered as an insult ; yet, Colonel Oldley, permit me through you to impress on the mind of Sir Horace, that in declining his generous offer, I am not influenced by pride or resentment, but by a consciousness that from him I deserve no kindness ; and to be compelled by love for his departed son to support a person he so utterly despised would be a trial at once cruel and unnatural, one to which, guilty as I am, I shall never subject him.

“ ‘ I have the honour to be

“ ‘ Sir,

“ ‘ Yours,

“ ‘ AIGLINE.’

“ ‘ To Colonel Simpson Oldley.’

“ I only signed my christian name, for I felt that I was hardly entitled to any other. Something like a gleam of satisfaction passed over me at having given this proof that at all events my crime did not result from cupidity. Being roused to worldly thoughts, my next act was to send back to the jeweller’s poor d’Estonville’s richest presents ; for I wished his debts to appear as small as possible to Sir Horace, and thus, as far as lay in my power, to save his memory from reproach. This required no effort, for I set no

value on the sparkling gems: with d'Estonville perished the personal vanity and ardent desire after general admiration, which had formed the basis of my errors.

“ Having so long lingered over the fatal scenes connected with Burgos, I shall relate as concisely as possible the succeeding events until I met Charles Mellish at Alicant. One circumstance, however, I must mention. Previous to quitting Burgos with the Allied Army, McDuff Gower addressed a few lines of condolence, requesting that in every extremity I would without hesitation apply to him for assistance, for that he should ever consider me in the light of a near relative. I felt much gratified at this attention, and though resolved never to trespass on his friendship, sent a grateful answer in which I explained the condition in which Sir Horace had found me; its cause and effects. This I did lest McDuff should hear the report, and regret the protection he so generously offered.

“ For some months after this, my life was a blank—I sank into a state of apathetic indifference. I quitted the handsome lodgings d'Estonville had procured, and retired to an humbler one not far from the ancient gate of Santa Maria; and although the winter had set in, the weather was so temperate that I would frequently quit the house, and wrapped in my mantilla, sit for

hours on the banks of the Arlanzon; but the circumstances of novelty, of antiquity, of historical interest which had delighted me in Madrid no longer pleased. The gloom of my soul overshadowed the whole earth; yet in some things I was fortunate. From my insignificance I was unmolested in Burgos, even while it was in possession of the French. Then the old Spanish woman,—a widow—with whom I resided, was friendly; and disposed to advantage of the various articles of dress which I bartered for my maintenance. Though extremely superstitious, and like the generality of her countrywomen, making a business—a very tedious one—of her religion—I should say forms, for she had not a spiritual idea beyond them—she treated me, for a heretic, with lenity; but fearful of being exposed to trouble, should her priests discover that she harboured one, she took great pains to initiate me into Popery, and sometimes when we were walking, nay even at our meals, or in bed, or on hearing the bell that preceded the consecrated wafer, she would make a rush, drag me to my knees, and hold me in that position till the sound died away in the distance, she mumbling prayers and crossing herself all the while.

“To this I was perfectly passive: it neither won a smile by its absurdity, nor a reproach for its inconvenience; but, insensible as I was, I could

not visit the cathedral and other churches without a sentiment of awe, and an unqualified feeling of admiration at the treasures of paintings, statues, and royal gifts which they contained. In a happier mood, methinks of all the cities I ever witnessed, I should have preferred Burgos; as it was, shunning the promenades and gardens frequented by the gay and happy, I spent much of my time in the chapel of the Augustines, and though its people were not my people, or its creed my creed, still I loved to hear its solemn service and the sonorous chanting of its monks. You will shake your head, Freville, when you read this, and look displeased; but fear not. I deeply regret to say there was little devotion in my attentions; had I been born a Catholic I should not have been the wretch I am.

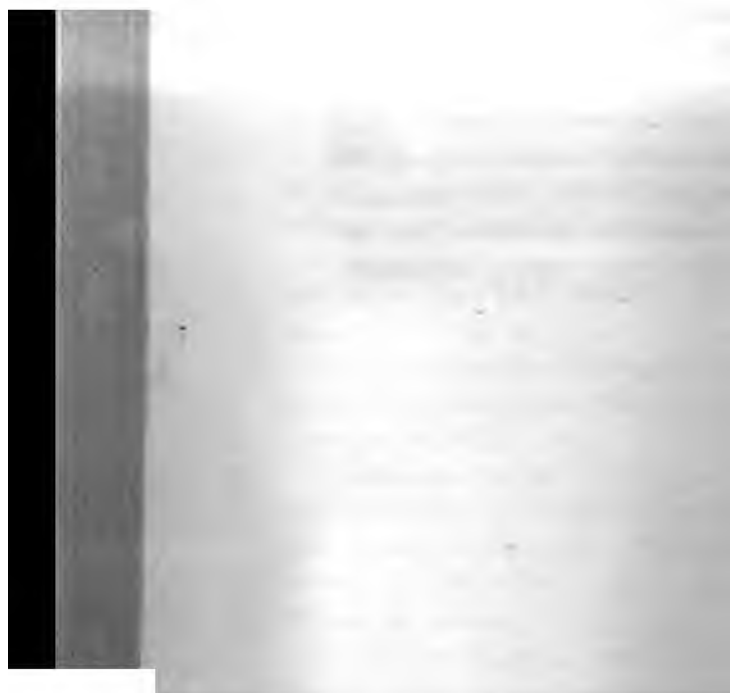
I remained in Burgos till the spring of thirteen, and was there when the French entered it as their strong-hold. It is needless to say that being surrounded by the allied army, they were soon obliged to evacuate, but not until, in their discomfiture, they destroyed the works of the castle. Thus I witnessed the total destruction of the fortifications which had caused d'Estonville's death, and I experienced a savage pleasure in seeing them hurled to the earth. And now again chance threw Ellen Mulcahy in my way: her husband belonged to the British cavalry which

stormed Burgos, and she had accompanied throughout the campaign. Nothing could add her pleasure at again—as she termed it—sending me out; and as the English troops were ordered for the Ebro, she warmly entreated of me to accompany her. At first I resisted, but my Spanish hostess advised me to go, saying that the French were in such a state of irritation, they would stop at no cruelty, and as to herself, she intended removing to Toledo. This determined yet I did not leave the spot where I had last seen d'Estonville without regret, unspeakable

END OF VOL. II.

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LIONEL DEERHURST.

VOL. III.





LIONEL DEERHURST;

OR,

FASHIONABLE LIFE

UNDER THE REGENCY.

EDITED

BY THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.


IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



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THE DEERHURSTS.

CHAPTER I.

Now, indeed, I was soon roused from my apathy, and perfectly startled at the mortifying, nay, the horrible position in which I had placed myself; and yet no alternative had been presented to me—I knew not whither to turn. True, Ellen was all respectful attention; but her husband was a regular John Bull: let me hope, a bad specimen of the race—for to all the uncouth savageness imputed to the English peasantry, and a want of genuine hospitality, (which cannot, I believe, be laid to their charge,) were added a penury and cupidity which, I hope, are singular.

My little means were nearly exhausted; so, to compensate for any expense I might prove at first, I voluntarily paid great attention to Ellen's two children, and this I soon perceived her husband began to claim as a right. One good sprang from

my position—I was obliged to exert myself; and though the heart may continue sad, still, bodily labour prohibits the possibility of pondering over affliction, thus it becomes less destructive to the health.

Well, Freville, we crossed the Ebro, and marched to Vittoria. You will laugh at my connecting myself with the army, but it is not the less true; I followed in its train,—no laughing matter to me, I can assure you. Of course there is no need of my telling of the battle of Vittoria, you know all about it. Ellen's serjeant was a good soldier, and being the means of capturing some of the cannon and luggage, was well rewarded with booty. This delighted her, for they were very poor, and it made him, for the time being, more tolerable; perhaps, too, his ferocity was lessened by loss of blood, for he had received a flesh-wound in his left arm, which weakened him; and as he certainly was much respected by his officers, they granted him permission to retire for a few days within the mountain fastnesses; this was the more desirable, as Ellen daily expected her confinement.

The spot which he selected was a small hamlet in the neighbourhood of Zubiri, I should suppose, about three leagues, or thereabouts, distant from it. It was a solitary, romantic place, and either from its insignificance, or from offering no position that could advantage the contending parties, had

It unmolested, even in the midst of the long warfare. I think it was on the 23rd 1813, we removed there; and to do the full justice, he had selected for our reception a quiet cottage, covered with vines.

The hamlet, which was situated in a small valley surrounded by lofty mountains, it consisted of a cluster of humble cottages, and an ancient chapel, with here and there a few villas erected on slight elevations, and those villas were generally inhabited by invalids; though there were no springs in the immediate neighbourhood, the air was considered very salubrious. The most striking feature in the landscape was a cascade, formed by a mighty torrent, which, falling from one of the loftiest of the mountains, bounding and foaming down impending cliffs till it found repose within the valley, rendered it so fertile, that in all directions fields of corn waved around in golden luxuriance; while abundant vines, almond, and fig-trees, were heavily weighed down by their luscious fruits; and again, these received effect from groves of oaks, by which they were sheltered.

The peasants who inhabited the cottages were, by speaking, a simple, indolent people; their employment mostly consisted in tending goats and in cultivating their gardens, and their whole life seemed absorbed in a bigoted attachment

to the forms of their religion, and a sentiment of respect, amounting to veneration, for the habits and customs of their ancestors, any improvement upon which they would have considered as a profane innovation

On the whole, these poor people behaved well to Ellen and me. It is perhaps unnecessary to remark, that, placed in so humble a position, I had no opportunity of forming any acquaintance with the more dignified occupants of the villas; and as except a few veterans, who, having served in the army, and by that means acquired some smattering of French, none of the cottagers could speak any language but their provincial Spanish, not one word of which I could comprehend, I had no opportunity of acquiring any information beyond my own observation. Yet though, as I may say, banished from all society,—for, of course, with such a person as Ellen, however well disposed, I could have no companionship or communication of ideas, and living in comparative poverty, the tranquillity, after all the fatigues and torments I had endured, possessed a great charm, and under its influence my health soon became renovated; indeed, I believe it to be impossible for any but the most obtuse to be placed amidst the magnificent objects of nature which surrounded our humble residence, and not have their thoughts elevated to the great Creator of all.

From several points I commanded an extensive view of the Pyrenees, many of which were clothed by fine woods; over some of these a blight had lately passed, tinging them—though in mid-summer—with the autumn's varied tints, while here and there a few of the stateliest of the pines which had been scathed and withered, spread out their bleached boughs, appearing like the skeletons of the forest, while others torn up from their roots lay scattered around. Again amidst these, the loftiest of the mountain chain jutted forward, and in the sterile strength of rocky surface, towering cliffs, and mineral treasures, seemed as if in cold scorn of the verdant beauties whose leafy honours were so rapidly passing away, this contrast added sublime grandeur to the whole landscape.

For my part, I perfectly delighted in the scene, and the wild sad fancies it awakened, and it was my custom as soon as Ellen's children were put to rest, to hasten towards the lake, and watch the moon as it rose over the valley; and methought in no place had I ever seen it rise in such glory, or shed such refulgence around. Positively, when its beams were reflected back by the sportive waters, or that illuminating some of the foremost objects of the landscape, it threw the back-ground into deeper shadow, it appeared the very scene of romantic fiction, and it scarcely required an effort of the imagination to people it with the fierce ban-

ditti of a Caravaggio. Strange operation of the mind, thus to abstract itself from existing causes the most important, to dwell upon the unreal visions of the past!

As I became more composed, I began to contemplate plans for the future. To continue in the state of poverty and humiliation in which I was placed, literally acting as a servant to Ellen, was too depressing, and my past sin with the departed d'Estonville prohibited the possibility of my being received into any respectable family. Laying little stress on the forms of religion, my first idea was to return to Burgos and enter the convent of Carmelite sisters as a boarder, but this I soon learned was not feasible. First, I had no money; next, the devastations of war rendered even the holy precincts of religion insecure; so I concluded upon trying to obtain the means of returning to London, there acquire information of George's ship, then write him a full statement of all my follies and sufferings "nothing extenuating," entreat his advice for my future conduct, and abide by his decision. Being thus resolved, I felt more content and equal to my humble duties.

We had been but a week at the hamlet when Ellen gave birth to a daughter, and as her health was precarious for some days, I was entirely confined to her apartment. This was a great privation, for the weather was delicious, and I longed to resume

my wanderings. One morning the veteran who supplied our marketing, in his bad French mentioned, that a great English lord had arrived at one of the villas, and that he was engaged to supply him with milk, butter, &c. This intelligence awakened no curiosity; the nearest of these residences was situated half a league up the mountain, and the invalids who inhabited it or the other villas rarely visited the hamlet, the air of which, from its vicinity to the lake, was often damp. Another week and Ellen's health was perfectly restored, and with a feeling almost amounting to pleasure, I resumed my solitary walks. It was late on a Sunday evening; and as I advanced to my favourite seat on the border of the lake, I lingered every moment to gaze on the sublime scenery over which the tranquillity of approaching night was already shed. The holy calm seemed analogous to my spirit; but, oh! how quickly it vanished, when having approached the rustic seat, I saw it occupied by Lord Beletrieve, who, though closely wrapped up to protect himself from the night air, could not be mistaken. A faint sickness, accompanied by an oppression of the heart and a presentiment of fresh woes, passed over me; with difficulty I suppressed a cry while I grasped at a tree for support; then though tottering from weakness I thought to glide off unperceived, and for that purpose crept towards the chesnut-grove, but he,

who had been anxiously watching for my appearance, was too quick of observation, and stepping rapidly forward greeted me with much kindness.

I know not what answer I made—for perhaps, at no instant of my life, was I ever so totally deprived of self-possession—but I said something of being ill, of being solicitous to return home, and I hurried some steps forward; but with his inimitable grace he drew me back, saying, “Nay, Aigline, it is in vain you would elude me. Night after night, at the risk of life, have I sat impatiently watching for this interview; so rest you here,” he continued, placing me on the rustic bench, “and when you are more composed I shall explain that, however coldly you have always rejected, nay, scorned me, I have never ceased to love you.”

“Nay, my Lord,” I exclaimed, with something of my former spirit. “the vanity that so long corrupted and misled me has vanished, and for ever. Thus the only influence you held is lost; and as to love, my all of affection is buried in the grave of d’Estonville Howard.” On saying these words, losing all self-control, I sobbed aloud.

He waited for some moments, and then, in a cold monotonous manner, replied, “Distress not yourself by alluding to the past. I know your whole history. Your trial for eloping from the MacMisserton was a public one, and your sub-

sent acts not very private, so one less interested in your fate than I have been might have learned of your adventures; but, Aigline," he continued, with some warmth of manner, "you have proved your discrimination into character to be just. I have since discovered that you were one of the few of the present age capable of loving. A heart like yours, even if it had been enshrined in a less captivating form, was a prize worthy of the seeking.

The coldest, the most passionless, must value the excitement of affection which can willingly make sacrifices; and indurated, as I admit myself to be, I love so ardent and exclusive I would unhesitatingly resign the concentration of cosmopolitism, the vanities of fashion, and all the factitious advantages, so long my sole pursuit—by Heaven I should!"

He spoke this with an energy so unlike his usual manner, that I felt startled; but recovering myself, I said, "Then, my Lord, let this very pledge of my devotion prove the impossibility of ever regarding another."

"Ay," he returned; "but the object is *dead*, the dead not only cannot return or requite affection, but remain cold and insensible to it."

Roaring aloud at the bitter truth, I exclaimed, "No, Lord Beletrieve; yet I would not give up the memory of d'Estonville Howard for any living girl."

"Not to say me," he sneeringly interrupted, "whom you never regarded; but, Aigline, listen patiently. You were wont to say in London that I was your destiny. Such was your conviction; and our convictions, however we may attempt to mystify them, are but instincts. Remember your own words first insinuated this belief into my bosom; and so powerful is the impression, that, amidst circumstances the most opposite to its fruition, I have never resigned the hope. Beautiful Aigline, gain then my gratitude, in addition to my love and admiration, by no longer rejecting my suit."

My indignation was so violent, that though I answered passionately, my voice was choked and unintelligible, and my whole frame trembled, but it did not suit his purpose to notice my agitation; and in his usual calm voice he continued, "Aigline, the night wind is blowing fresh over the lake, so I shall not detain you; but, as I accompany you to the humble home you inhabit, will explain how I discovered your being here."

Observing a profound silence, I arose, folded my arms together so as not to accept his support; then shunning the grove, proceeded by the moonlight path. He gave his sickly smile, and without forcing his attentions walked by my side, saying, "It were tedious to enter into any account of the events that occurred to me after you left London,

particularly as they would create no sympathy. You are aware that some time since I lost Prince's favour, and with it the regard of the whole court party, which had formed my world. As philosopher enough, if I could not conquer indignation, to disguise it; so, with a contempt profound and well placed for my *set* as they would possibly entertain towards me, I quitted London with no change of sentiment but a higher respect for the laws, which, spite of royal displeasure, left my head in safety. But the cottage is in view, and I see my groom, as I ordered him, has brought my mule near to it, so I must hasten and relate the circumstance which led to my discovering that you were here. For some months back I have been straying at Baden; for, with a pertinacity by no means pleasing, the gout, spite of the desertion of my friends, still adheres to me. From a trifling cause, the only servant I brought from England—for I give a decided preference to foreigners—was Pat Mulcahy, your Ellen's brother. The fellow has an Irish wit and freedom of manner which nothing can keep in check, consequently, when he received letters from his sister describing your misfortunes, regrets, humiliations, the savageness of her husband, &c., &c., being very indignant he repeated them all to me. Aigline, need I say more? In spite of broken health and fortune, I

hastened here to offer you my friendship—to be your slave, if you will accept me as such."

He paused, for we had reached the cottage-door. Before I entered, feeling that now, in an instant, I could escape from his presence, I haughtily and vehemently rejected his attentions, accusing him of adding, by his unwelcome presence, to my sorrow. Certainly, while I spoke he betrayed much emotion, far more than I expected; but without waiting for his reply I darted into the house, and soon after heard the heavy tread of his mule as he rode off.

This pursuit of Lord Beletrieve destroyed the composure I was gaining, and totally confined me to the cottage. I would not stir out lest I should be exposed to his assiduities, and once or twice that he presumed to call, I had him refused admittance. Placing every dependence on the sincerity of Ellen's friendship, I confided to her my perplexity: in effect, after much consultation—and without money I could do nothing—I concluded on writing to McDuff Gower for a supply sufficient to take me to England, and also to consult him on the safest route by which I could proceed there, for many of the roads were rendered unsafe by the war. I had some reason to believe he was in Toledo, but as I did not wish to apply on so great an uncertainty, Ellen prevailed on her husband, who

and an extensive military acquaintance, to make inquiries, the result of which was, that we found McDuff had been dangerously wounded at Vittoria, and had been sent from thence to Scotland to be under the care of his friends. It is needless now to say how bitterly I regretted not having known that he had been in Vittoria; and independent of selfish views, I was much grieved at his danger. Writing to Scotland was out of the question, as most probably my letter would fall into the hands of his wife or uncle, and I would not give the McMisserton the triumph of knowing my fallen fortunes. All this, by irritating my temper increased my abhorrence of Lord Beletrieve, and I thought that there was no extremity which could tempt me to bear him again in my presence. Alas! a power stronger than my will ruled over my destiny.

Hopeless of assistance from McDuff, I became more desponding than ever. At this period, Helen's husband, who had been absent on duty, returned. At first, I perceived an alteration for the better in his manner, for though he could not overcome his savage rudeness, still, in his uncouth way he tried to be civil—but this was of short duration, for, as I have since had reason to believe, he was won over to Lord Beletrieve's interest, and instantly of an evening returned to the cottage, accompanied by his Lordship, and then on some

pretence retired, leaving us together. This positively infuriated me, and I did not hesitate to accuse Lord Beletrieve of meanness in using such a vulgar tool to persecute and insult a helpless, afflicted woman.

And now, Freville, I come to the strangest part of my story. How it came to pass I know not, but so it was, that his Lordship became so attached to me that, after all his vain boasting and indulgence in his cosmopolite philosophy, he offered to bind himself in the most solemn or legal manner, in the event of the McMisserton's death, to unite his fate to mine by marriage, but I scornfully and positively rejected the offer. He was not, however, easily put off from any pursuit, and mortifying as some might conceive it to be to my vanity, I really believe his perseverance proceeded as much from a resolve not to be defeated, as from regard. It would be tedious to enter into a detail of all our interviews and quarrels—for to such they actually amounted—one thing I must in justice say, he scarcely ever forgot the polish of the high-bred gentleman, while I fear anger often led me not to remember the politeness of the lady.

Though but a fortnight confined, Ellen was well enough to accompany her husband, who had orders to join his corps, and this step was the more necessary as some French scouts had been discovered reconnoitering the immediate neigh-

hood of the hamlet. On this occasion, the
ant acted towards me like a perfect ruffian,
suddenly proposing that at all risks I should con-
sult with his two elder children in the hamlet, as
I could not be encumbered with so much heavy
age; and when I refused to submit to such a
risk and danger, he swore that I should not
company him. Terrified at the thought of
being left without means or protection, in the
heart of the Pyrenees, and with people to whose
language I was a stranger, and suspecting that

Beletrieve had used his influence to have
me driven to extremity, I sent to request his
assistance. He instantly obeyed, no doubt expect-
ing my part some concession; but after repre-
senting to him the cruelty of exposing me to such
situation, I vehemently declared that I would cast
myself into the lake sooner than listen to him fur-

Neither my accusation nor threat seemed
affect him, though he coolly denied the first and
admitted the latter; however, I so far succeeded as
to obtain permission to accompany Ellen, and on
the following day quitted the hamlet, without, I
need not say, so much as bidding his Lordship

How little in the days of our pride and prosper-
ity we comprehend the vicissitudes which
await us, or the strength which we acquire
in circumstances to support hardships and evils,

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CHAPTER II.

ON after this we left the Pyrenees, and set off
our way to Alicant, where the regiment to
Ellen's husband belonged was stationed. I
here observe, though totally unacquainted
military matters, and all connected with the
except just the scenes which passed under my
attention, that from the indulgence he received,
being so frequently sent to different quarters,
I greatly suspected that Ellen's husband was em-
ployed as a spy or scout; however, this is merely
conjecture. At Pampeluna he procured a com-
modious carriage, which had belonged to a French
officer in Soult's army; and which, with other
valuable luggage, had been seized when that
officer made his retreat; he also obtained some
choice and dried provisions. This added much
to our comforts, so, carefully avoiding the stations
avoided by the French, we reached Alicant in

crowded that the best lodging procure consisted of a couple of rooms rendered more impure by being in a town, and not exposed to the fresh air. I was now inured to hardships, and I sighed at the poverty and inconvenience I was subjected to.

But now a heavier affliction awaited me, one which was the prelude to sorrow. Owing to our confined lodging, the climate, or the fatigues of her confinement, poor Ellen caught a fever. This deprived her babe of its mother's milk, and it sickened, and died; grief in order, and in two days she followed. My regret for her loss was sincere, but it was roused from its indulgence by her husband, who, in his bluff manner, told me to now do for myself, as he was going to do for himself.

range land, with scarcely the means of existence, all belonging to Ellen was of course taken y; and the few valuables I possessed at d'Es-ville's death I had parted with at Burgos.

The people at whose house I lodged were small ers in wine and fruit, and their house in the ings was one of entertainment. There were or three pretty girls in the family; and these, the generality of the Valencians, were gentle pleasing in their manners, and I strove to win r affections; but they possessed none even for other; gay, light, and capricious, they thought othing but pleasure, ever changing its object: I soon found they could be vindictive; for, ided at my refusal to join in their revels, even gh I imputed my seclusion to grief for Ellen, ately dead, they began to regard me with ke and suspicion; treated me with neglect, ging exorbitantly for the meanest provisions. rceived, too, that considering me as a reproach heir levity, they were solicitous to banish me . their house, though I had paid in advance for odgings, and I was aware of owing my safety heir dread of the British, who, not knowing riendlessness, they apprehended might resent injury done to me. Indeed, nothing could ed the sentiment of hatred entertained by the ncians and other Spaniards towards the Eng-

Obliged by circumstances to receive them

as allies and friends into the very heart of country, they viewed them with jealousy and suspicion: peradventure the war had left them choice of evils. True, they preferred the English to the French; but they bitterly cursed the fate that subjected them to the encroachments of either.

Now indeed I was desolate: at Burgos the Castilian widow was friendly and considerate; I had the means of rewarding her; then Ellen my countrywoman, (oh, in a foreign land, what a volume of affection that term expresses!) though I knew not her full value till she was gone, still I had felt her presence as a strength and support; but at Alicant I was surrounded by enemies, and from very fear obliged to shut myself up in my unwholesome garret, so late a scene of death, and when nature required me to steal timidly forth in quest of nourishment. Could any one who had known me in the days of my prosperity, when crowds of the great delighted to pay me adulation, what a sad picture of human vicissitudes might have been drawn! There I remained for hours at my lonely apartment, looking out upon the brilliant scene. In Burgos, the campaign had assumed the wildest horrors; but in Alicant, it appeared the pomp and pride of circumstance. The processions were ushered in by bands of martial

In the evenings generally closed with softer measures; then, riding about in the full panoply of war, and in their various uniforms, were to be seen the British, the Spanish, and the civilian army, also the newly-raised forces from the Balearic Islands, while the streets were crowded with peasantry from the different provinces, each in their peculiar costume, and, again, among these mingled the dark-robed priests; in short, the whole bore the appearance of a splendid masquerade, and looked more like the celebration of a carnival than preparations for the deadly work of conquest. There I sat, gazing down on the silent show, my loneliness embittered by the knowledge, that among the concourse were hundreds of my countrymen: yet to all I was a stranger—none even recognized my existence.

Daily my small stock of clothes was diminishing, and, as the Valencians are a very industrious race, they applied to the people with whom I lodged to obtain me some work; but they refused, remarking that, as soon as the month for which I had engaged their rooms expired, I should quit their house. This embarrassed me greatly, as it wanted but a few days. At this period, to my surprise, I received a letter from Lord Beletrieve, written with the cool calculating heartlessness which had characterized his address: he said, having understood that I was proceeding to Alicant, he had followed

me there, though by shorter stages than my soldier-guide had taken; he then, after expatiating on all the misery likely to result from the position in which I was placed, renewed his offers of friendship and assistance. This address roused not only my indignation, but resentment, for I fancied he had instigated Ellen's husband to act cruelly; but it was not so, for I afterwards found Lord Beletrive was even ignorant of her death. Resolved that no distress should tempt me further to degrade myself, I did not deign to write an answer, but returned his letter under cover. All these circumstances enervated me, and what with the confined air and bad diet, I felt that my health was fading; and though I would gladly have laid down the burthen of life, still I shuddered at perishing amidst those who perfectly abhorred me. I was solicitous, likewise, to escape Lord Beletrive's persecutions, not from any apprehension that he could ever induce me to accept his proffered friendship, for that I considered impossible, but I anticipated his visiting me; and then the animadversions of the sarcastic Valencians, which I knew would follow. Provoked—disgusted with them all, I resolved on making some effort to escape.

It was late in the afternoon, when, wrapping myself up, and taking in a small parcel some trifle I still possessed, I stole quietly from my lodging, resolved, if I could possibly procure another, to

turn; and as I had paid in advance, there no dishonour in thus absconding. I directed my steps towards a suburb immediately the coast; it was the most ancient part of town, and on our first arrival at Alicant, len's husband had tried to procure accommodation there, but had failed. The day had been very sultry, but the evening air blew freshly over the sea, and as the breeze cooled my burning temples, I felt refreshed, and a sense of pleasure stole over my frame. To enjoy it more fully I crept down beneath the shelter of a lowly cliff, and from mere exhaustion fell asleep. I must have slept a couple of hours, for the night had closed in, when weak and unrefreshed, and with a sense of shivering, I started up and prepared to depart,—but where was I to go? It was a fearful question. It was too late to seek another lodging; and would the people with whom I lived again admit me at that hour? Freville, man's more independent and sterner nature cannot even comprehend my desolation as I tottered forward, feeling that my trembling limbs could bear me no further! There was no moon, but the twilight shed sufficient light to show surrounding objects.

Calm as a lake lay the blue waters of the Mediterranean, its broad waves scarcely disturbing the repose. From above were heard the varied noises of the town, enlivened by bands of martial music;

and as these sounds died away, softer notes, accompanied by the splashing of oars, floated on the air; and as I looked wildly around, through the vistas of the trees, I every now and then perceived groups of gaily-dressed serenaders passing by in merry mood. It seemed strange that misery great as mine could exist in a scene of such loveliness; clasping my hands I sobbed aloud, muttering, "Do I indeed stand alone in this wide world? Must I degrade my nature to the lowest state, or perish for want?" I advanced to the very edge of the rock,—I looked wistfully down on the sea; the temptation was strong, but better thoughts pressed on my soul; I fell on my knees exclaiming, "Almighty God, do not desert me in this hour; I am dying, and without an irremediable crime, a few days, and this terrible conflict will be over!" There was a blessing in the thought. I rose from the ground. In doing so I staggered, and my parcel falling down, dashed into the water;—it was my last means of support. I uttered a loud cry; at the same instant an English officer who had been watching on the shore for the return of some boating party, alarmed at my scream rushed forward, grasped my arm, and cried, "Unfortunate woman, what have you done?" I made no reply, but pointed to the floating parcel; he sprang down the cliffs, and with the point of his sword drew it forward; then

bringing it back said, "And was it for this you uttered that cry?—I feared something much worse." I attempted to thank him, but tears choked my utterance. He seemed affected, and in kindly accents said, "My poor woman, you had better go home to your friends; soon, and this place will be crowded with a party returning from the neighbourhood of Murcia; here, I hope this may be of assistance to you;" and he handed me a doubloon.

"Generous stranger," I exclaimed, "I have no home, no friends, but I am near unto death; in charity then assist me to some cave or nook in the rocks, and let me depart in peace; and so may God assist you in the hour of need!"

He stooped over me, for I had sunk back against the cliff, and in gentle accents replied, "An Englishwoman, and in this distress! and your voice seems familiar to my ears,—but that must be fancy." He sighed deeply. "What can I do to assist, to relieve you? Surely some relatives or friends must have accompanied you to Spain, and whatever disunion may have arisen to place you in this extremity, in the name of Heaven let me conduct you back to them; you know not the dangers that encompass you here."

I was so faint as to be scarcely able to speak, but by an effort, and in broken accents I replied, "I lost my protector at the siege of Burgos;—

since then a country-woman who befriended me has died. I am now quite desolate, reduced to the last extremity by poverty and illness."

"Lady," he answered, "for such your language proves you to be, think me not impertinent, but I would willingly serve you; in a foreign land you have an undeniable claim on your countrymen; treat me then with candour, and tell me, if your husband perished in battle, why did not his brother officers step forward to assist you? Not to speak of humanity you have just claims——"

"No, no," I rejoined, "I have no legal claims. I quitted the pale of society; Captain d'Estonville Howard was my protector, not husband; go, then, go! and let me die in peace! It is my last resource." As I spoke I waved him off.

I felt him tremble with emotion as in hasty accents he said, "My heart cannot be mistaken, and yet, O God, surely it cannot be Aigline Tenant whom I find in such extremity!"

The sound of my own name, tenderly pronounced, affected me deeply; drawing the mantilla closer to my face I wept aloud, and in quivering accents inquired, "Who still deigns to remember the existence of one so lost?"

He answered with energy, "Not lost, dearest Aigline, though you may have been misled; and he who now addresses you is Charles Mellish, the playfellow, companion, friend, of your early days;

need I remind you of the years of kindness I owe to your departed parents, the friendship of your brother George, which has never known diminution? Oh, Aigline, can the days of happiness, experienced in Glanmire Villa, your joyous hospitable home, ever be forgotten? In this foreign land, then, view me not only in the light of a devoted brother, but as one who would gladly pay back the meed of gratitude for past kindness and friendship."

I reached out my hand saying, "Charles Melliſh, this meeting is most fortunate; should I live you shall learn the particulars of the misery in which you find me; but indeed I am very ill; lead me where you will for shelter; I know I can depend upon you as on George, whom I never against expect to see."

Ere he stooped to raise me he drew his sword, saying, "Aigline, this was your father's gift, sent with the kind wish that it might carve my way to honour and promotion. I swear on it never to betray your confidence; if I should, may its point be dyed in my heart's best blood," and he pressed his lips to the blade. "It needeth not," I would have said, but agitation overcame me, and, though not insensible, I lay helpless on the earth.

Freville, the events I have heretofore related however unfortunate, seem but the natural results of my indiscretion; but I come now to speak of an

act to whose true cause few, if any, will yield their credit, and yet it sprang from an exalted though most mistaken sentiment. However, it brought its punishment, for he for whom the sacrifice was made despised, abhorred me,—and justly.

When I had in part recovered it was with difficulty that Mellish supported me to a retired nook that lay between two low rocks, requesting I would try and compose myself until he obtained assistance. He then retired, and in about a quarter of an hour came back, accompanied by an elderly woman of respectable appearance; he also brought a flask of the wine called *vino tinto*, which the Valencians consider so good for invalids. After making me swallow a few drops, and seeing my head resting on the woman's knee, he again left me in quest of a lodging. Had I been capable of consideration at the time, I must have guessed that he found great difficulty in obtaining one, but happily I was scarcely sensible; three more hours and the morning began to dawn, when he returned accompanied by two men, and I was carefully conveyed down to the water's edge and rowed over to a noble-looking residence, about half a league from the town. It was a perfect paradise, surrounded by all the balmy luxuries of Spain's glowing clime. I afterwards learned that it belonged to a Hidalgo, who, being suspected of favouring the French party, on the success of the

was obliged to fly: his lady, who re-
had offered it at a high price to the allied
t it was considered inconveniently distant
: fortress, so they declined its purchase.
ellish chanced to hear this, and finding
sible on the instant to obtain another
and being nearly distracted at leaving me
was suffering from illness and exposed to
t air, he hired it for the space of a month
orbitant price—for the Donna to whom
ged refused to let it for a shorter period.

CHAPTER III.

FOR the next week I continued dangerously ill, during which time the best medical assistance among the British in Alicant, also a Spanish physician of eminence who resided there, attended me, and as my health returned every delicacy was procured to tempt my appetite. My wardrobe, if not extravagantly, was elegantly supplied, and a Spanish and an English woman were engaged to wait my commands; and, as I was ordered to be constantly in the air, a carriage and a boat were always in readiness. This noble Mellish, for I must and will call him so, Freville, to all the generosity of his country added its thoughtless imprudence. Alas! how inscrutable are our destinies when to such friendship I owed my greatest sorrow; and, after all the poverty I had witnessed, and my knowledge of d'Estonville's involvements on my account, how inexcusable was my dulness, if I shall not rather call it selfishness, in

not inquiring into the means by which such expense was supported. I can only plead that I was scarcely recovering from my illness when the whole truth came to my knowledge.

About a fortnight had passed since the night Mellish first discovered me, and I was able to sit in the principal saloon. It was a superb apartment hung with Venetian mirrors and some fine paintings by Velasquez and Murillo; and the lattices, which opened to the sea, were shaded by draperies of the richest silk, and all in the palace was in keeping with this magnificence; and, at length, I was led to reflect how Mellish could afford all this, and resolved to inquire whether any favourable change had taken place in his circumstances. I knew, by experience, that at the period every thing in Alicant was extremely dear, and watched for an opportunity to address him on the subject. This was attended with more difficulty than could be supposed, for, while during my illness he had been all attention and anxiety, he now rarely visited me more than twice a week, and then appeared confused and in a hurry. It would be coquetry to deny that I suspected this apparent inconsistency resulted from renewed love: that the love that from boyhood he had experienced for me was revived, and every principle of honour and prudence influenced him to struggle against it; as to me, independent of my still exist-

ing union with the McMisserton, my all of love was buried with d'Estonville, and without attempting to penetrate Mellish's sentiments I avoided music and every subject likely to render me more attractive.

Another week passed on, and I observed Mellish appeared thin, and so depressed, that he would sit for hours in my apartment, scarcely opening his lips, and when addressed, was absent and distant. Sometimes, when roused to consciousness by my observation, he laughed at his own blunders, but more generally starting up, would make a hurried apology and hasten away, and perhaps not return for a couple of days. This grieved me the more deeply, because he daily expected orders to join the forces lying before St. Sebastian; and report, if possible, exaggerated the dreadful contest likely to ensue. These rumours not only awakened my memory of the fatal siege of Burgos, but filled me with alarm lest the gallant youth, who though far less dear than had been d'Estonville, was still equally kind and more disinterestedly generous, should meet the same sad fate; and my health, scarcely renovated, again faded before this fresh anxiety, which engrossed my thoughts and rendered me less assiduous than I should have been in inquiring into the state of his finances. Indeed, once or twice, when I had touched on the subject, he delicately eluded it. Such was the state of

things when I received an account that Mellish's corps was ordered to proceed to St. Sebastian. This news reached me on the morning of the 31st of August, and I ardently longed to see him at once, to express my gratitude for the protection he had so liberally granted, and next to consult him as to where I should go, for to remain in the palace in which he had placed me was not to be thought of; and on the other hand I shuddered at the idea of being again left desolate, more particularly should the attack on St. Sebastian fail, that fortress being a place of such importance, it was generally supposed that its conquest would in some measure prove decisive for or against the allied army. My anxiety at this period about my own safety illustrated how different were my feelings from those I experienced when d'Estonville was in question.

It was late in the evening when Mellish entered the saloon, where I somewhat impatiently watched for him. Three days had elapsed without his either calling or sending to inquire after me, and this last neglect was so unusual, that I began to apprehend some military orders had compelled him to quit Alicant without permitting him leisure even to bid me adieu; so, on now seeing him, I bounded forward with a glow of pleasure, but started back on observing his countenance, which

was perfectly wild and ghastly, and exclaimed, "Good heaven! my dear Mellish, what can have happened? you look ill—very ill—you have been in battle—wounded." I uttered a cry as I added, "Must all I love, the noblest, the best, perish in this inhuman war?"

In a moment he was at my feet; he grasped my hands in his, as in a hoarse voice he cried, "Aigline, repeat those words; say I am dear to you, that you love me, that you will mourn for one who, from boyhood, has adored, nay, worshipped you; one who willingly would sustain every dishonour for your sake. Oh, no," he exclaimed, starting up and striking his forehead, "that is false; no, not dishonour, and yet I have no choice between it and death;" and he was rushing from the saloon, but springing after him I caught his arm, exclaiming, "Mellish, compose yourself; you rave; or say, what can have occurred so terrible? your wild manner alarms me beyond measure." As I spoke, I staggered from weakness and terror:

"Forgive me, Aigline, forgive me, my best love, I may now call you so, for soon—but it matters not." Interrupting him, I cried, "Oh, Mellish; some affliction, some disgrace has fallen on you; in pity's sake explain yourself; no certainty can be so cruel as this suspense; consider you are now my only friend; will you cancel all the kind-

ness you have shown me by withdrawing your confidence? it is most ungenerous;" and I burst into tears.

Deeply affected, he said, "Aigline, I am to-night too much agitated to explain, but to-morrow evening you shall either hear from or see me—in the mean time compose yourself, and if you owe me any kindness, when I am gone, be guided by my advice."

"To what advice do you allude, and where are you going?" I demanded hastily.

"We are ordered to St. Sebastian—its castle must be won," he answered; "on the matter of my advice you shall hear from me; and now, Aigline, farewell: though another has been dearer to you, none have ever loved you more truly, more madly, than Charles Mellish." He pressed my hands convulsively to his lips—to his bosom—then, ere I could reply, rushed from the house. A moment, and I heard the striking of his oars under my lattice; I flew to it, waving my handkerchief for him to return, but he had flung himself in the stern of his boat, and with his head resting on his breast, did not even see me, and so we parted. Good heaven! little did he anticipate to what misery he had consigned me.

Mellish gone, I remained in the greatest perplexity, with no possible clue to unravel his evident distress, for shut up in the palace I had no com-

munication with any person. I have before observed that I did not understand the Spanish language, and my English attendant, though a soldier's wife, did not belong to Mellish's corps; as I afterwards understood, hoping to avoid the scandal of supporting me—for he well knew few would do justice to the noble motives that influenced his conduct—he had surrounded me with strangers. Vain attempt to elude observation! but Freville, I must hasten to an end. Of all the scenes in my eventful life, I can least endure to dwell upon the one I have now to relate. Alas! even to commit it to paper covers me with confusion.

CHAPTER IV.

the clock strike ten, but I was too sad
ights, and there I sat looking out on
ch was lighted up by the harvest moon.
ge superstition, but I have remarked
additional sorrow to me always comes
oy a full bright moon, so with a sigh at
rance,—for at the moment it came
to my mind—I was going to retire
or suddenly opened, and through the
ht I saw Lord Beletrieve enter. I
n a kind of terror, exclaiming, “Lord
and unannounced! how is this, or am
,”

ceived nor pleased, Aigline,” he an-
his usual air of gallantry, “for though
very other can gain an interest in that
rieve sues in vain for even the simple
titude for attentions never neglected.
apt me not,” he added, hastily, for I

attempted to speak, "even as I have since landed while almost in want of the necessaries of life—a life scarcely secure among the low-lived vindictive Valencians with whom you resided—you haughtily, disdainfully returned my letter, not even deigning to answer it. Was that well, Aigline?"

"And should not this, my Lord," I said, proudly, "have taught you to shun, not persecute me?"

"Certainly," he rejoined, sarcastically; "only I am your destiny—there is no resisting the decree of fate."

"This is mockery, my Lord," I cried, passionately, "to dwell upon words spoken sportively by a weak romantic girl, and so many years since; really it is quite absurd." As I uttered these words I rose haughtily to retire; but, without quitting his seat—for he had sat down next to me at the lattice—he replied,

"As you will, Aigline; but ere you depart, know that the fate of Captain Mellish, nay, I verily believe his life, depends upon our present interview."

"Captain Mellish!" I repeated, "does your Lordship mean to say that his destiny also is in your keeping? Why, you must deal in necromancy," and I uttered a bitter forced laugh.

He rejoined in his usual bland manner, "Necromancy, or no necromancy, I affirm what I say."

lieve to be the case, namely, that except some immediate steps to prevent it be taken, ere four-and-twenty hours elapse Captain Mellish will have departed this life, taking out his quietus by firing a pistol through his brains; and if I attended on his inquest, my unhesitating verdict should be, brought to death by the fascinations of the lovely, irresistible, but ill-omened Aigline McMisserton, alias Tennent," and he gave his pallid smile and shrug.

Though my very pulses throbbed with terror as I listened to his words, which so fearfully accounted for poor Mellish's recent agitation, I commanded myself so far as to say, though my accents were scarcely intelligible, "Lord Beletrieve, it is very unkind of you to terrify me in this manner. If I have offended, pray excuse me; and do not put me to the torture by these ambiguous hints."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with vivacity, "Love, who tames lions, and guides them by silken reins, has at length subdued Aigline Tennent's haughty temper, and she deigns to apologise to Lord Beletrieve for constant repulses and unwonted rudeness." As he said these words, his pallid countenance, on which the moonbeams played, looked perfectly demoniacal. Terrified, miserable, I sank on my seat unable to answer. After a time, he rose with his usual air of calm dignity, saying, "I shall now bid you good night; one good at least must result

from my visit ; it will prepare you for the shock of Captain Mellish's death or disgrace, whichever of the two may happen."

Springing up, I caught him by the arm as I exclaimed, "You but mock me ; if you thought such an event probable, nay possible, you could not be so composed ; speak, my Lord, and remove my anxiety."

He looked full in my face, and then returned a natural but sarcastic laugh, ere he said, "My dear little girl, you are the greatest visionary I ever met. Why, what is it to me if Captain Mellish and his whole corps are shot, or shoot themselves, before morning ?—I must be very philanthropic indeed to trouble myself on the occasion, and philanthropy is by no means a feature in my character. Nay more, my pretty Aigline, all sensitive as you wish others to be, I wot if this Captain Mellish were not engaged in the fray, you would sleep soundly even while the attack on Saint Sebastian was being made, though without any prescience, you and all must know, that probably to its conquest a thousand lives will be sacrificed. Bah ! I came here to entertain myself, and by fooleries to divert my mind from serious thoughts, which only serve to awaken contempt for my own nature, without the power of changing or improving it. So good night. Should Mellish perish—well."—As he spoke he advanced towards the door.

Following him I exclaimed, "Oh, my Lord, let me entreat you not to leave me in this frightful suspense. I know something has agitated Captain Mellish; in mercy explain the cause."

"You love this man to distraction," he bitterly retorted, casting on me a look of scorn, "you are not the devoted being I fancied. Captain d'Estonville Howard is already forgotten. Bah! with my experience how could I delude myself into thinking one of your sex could be devoted?"

"No, no," I answered, "d'Estonville Howard never can be forgotten; but this matters not now. I call Heaven to witness Mellish is not my lover. Since we met in Spain a word of compliment to me, not to say tenderness, has never passed his lips. Know, Lord Beletrieve," I added impressively, "he was the companion of my childhood, domesticated in my father's house, is the friend of my absent brother. When my soul was pure he knelt by my side in prayer, and those memories win from him that respect which my unhappy fate has caused me to forfeit from others." I paused, and burying my face in my hands wept bitterly.

"Can this be true?" he demanded, in a tone of unusual kindness; "I thought that with the change of manners the spirit of chivalry had passed away; if but for the novelty, it were pleasant to see it revived."

"My Lord, it is most true; and, believe me,

prevalent as is the power of sin, there is still much virtue and goodness to be met."

"No sermon to me, Aigline; I hate such ~~proy~~ nonsense," he exclaimed quickly; "but if you would have me stay, and put you in the way of seeing Captain Mellish, why we must change characters;—to make use of an Irish phrase, you must be the coxer. I have flattered you long enough, and without success; now I must be flattered, simply because in the present instance the power lies with me. You women when you have the rule are great tyrants; we men are far more generous."

"What am I to do?" I cried, petulantly interrupting him.

"Just condescend to use some of your women's wiles,—no need of teaching;—your sex possess them instinctively; like the antennae of the butterfly, they serve to feel your way to our hearts, and when judiciously wielded are far more powerful than the more masculine weapons of dagger and broadsword," and he gave his ~~sarcastic smile~~.

"This is extreme cruelty," I cried, "to mock my anxiety; my Lord, explain yourself; what do you require of me?"

"I perceive you refuse to humour my folly," he said, coldly, "consequently my stay here is useless. Good night, fair lady; you will soon repent your obduracy."

And he was going, when I exclaimed, "If your Lordship promises to tell me the exact truth, I shall obey your wishes in this foolish frolic."

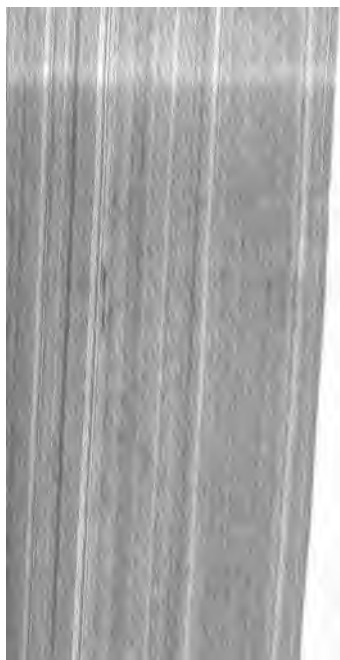
His brow darkened, he cast on me that look of withering scorn which rendered his cold bloodless countenance almost terrible. Perhaps he was aware of this, for he seldom indulged his anger. Now turning towards me he rejoined—

"Aigline, I should forgive this insult, for you belong to a different grade, else you would know that, whatever other vices may stain his character, the nobleman seldom stoops to deceit. Certain of having his manners, nay, his follies, admired and imitated by the grovelling multitude, to them he leaves such meanness. The aristocracy naturally expect adulation, not to stoop to lies; except," he added, trying to change his taunting tone into one of gallantry, "when a pretty woman is in question, then of course he becomes the flatterer."

He took my hand, but I drew it away with unaffected disgust.

"Bah!" he exclaimed, pettishly, "though I hope not quite so mad as Hamlet, I hate the world and myself as thoroughly——" and he took a long pinch of snuff.

Confounded, abashed at the insolent superiority he assumed, and again yielding to the fearful thought that his power over me was irresistible, I made no reply, but involuntarily sighed.



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e to my observation," he answered, "your tyrants. Here you oblige me to speak of l at the very instant my heart is overflow- its own tenderness; but, Aigline, you are beautiful, accomplished, have a right to ad, so I obey. Say, must I plead forgive- introducing myself in my explanation?" no reply, and with a wily softness of he proceeded. "Aigline, on the evening rned my note unanswered, I was so indig- at I concluded on giving up my idle pur- t it was not so easy to resign the object ; and after a few days I resolved to seek a l interview, and for that purpose went to se where you had lodged; there I saw to be shocked at the circumstances in ou had been placed. The anger I expe- at finding you preferred to exist in such yielded to anxiety for your safety when I you had eloped. No matter what horrors d suggested—they were sufficient to rouse n my usual apathy about others, and I into such inquiries as soon led to a know- of your residing here. The certainty of ath could not have more deeply grieved : strange as it certainly is, and absurd as I t to be, Aigline, I positively adore you. nxious to see Captain Mellish, whom now of for the first time, I renewed an acquaint-



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corps, a Mr. Fitz O., as great a fool it would appear as himself, and who instantly accommodated him, receiving his note payable in six weeks. Now if Captain Mellish had gravely reflected where he was to get means to pay back his money, he would have quitted the habits of his country, and offended pretty little Cupid and old Ireland, both proverbially indiscreet; no fear of that while your health was in danger; so he soon placed you here, surrounded by every elegance. Do you know, though I must condemn, I admire the mad generosity of the act, more particularly now that I find it was utterly free from selfishness. Aigline, you look incredulous; but even in this unromantic age, we must admire noble deeds; and surely in real life such disinterested friendship is seldom met. Well, you recovered, looked more beautiful than ever, and he fled the itchery, but unhappily could not so easily elude his debt; so, while no doubt engaged in writing sonnets on your eyes, or by the pale light of the moon apostrophising his own misery, or singing a cantata, or amusing his melancholy in some other rephron-like style, lo! his friend Fitz O. took a fever and died; and then it was found that, being much addicted to drink and idleness, he had committed the whole management of his accounts to a serjeant of his troop, a most determined ruffian; and who, on Mellish obtaining from the pay-

master another hundred doubloons, had, in his office of confidential clerk, by some *coup-de-main*, led him to put his signature for two,—thus making him indebted for three, one more than he had borrowed.

“On discovering this trick, Mellish furiously accused the serjeant of swindling. Now, had he possessed the means of liquidating the debt he had really incurred, he might have proceeded with some chance of justice; as it was, he only roused the anger of the villain, who unhesitatingly charged him with having borrowed the money from Fitz O. while the latter from intoxication was incapable of knowing what he was about. This was a serious accusation, implicating Captain Mellish’s honor as a soldier and a gentleman; and, unfortunately, he had no witnesses to disprove the falsehood; on the contrary, Mrs. Fitz O., at once to enforce payment, and as far as possible exonerate her husband’s memory from lending money not his own—for several were short of their pay—not only offered to support the serjeant’s evidence, but set up the hue and cry, that without the doubloons, she and her five children could not proceed to England, but must perish in a strange land. Now, being downright ugly, and her children pug-nosed and sandy haired, her lament awakened but little sympathy, until it was ascertained that Mellish had involved himself to support you, Aigline. No

sooner was this circumstance known than the liveliest sympathy was expressed on all sides for the Fitz O.'s. In its exuberance, the officers declared that as soon as the doubloons were paid, they would raise a subscription for their future support. Thus," continued Lord Beletrieve, with his most expressive shrug and sneer, "good sprang from the most contemptible passions."

I made no reply; taking one of his long pinches of snuff, in a tone of bitterness he added: "And now, Aigline, I must again return to my uninteresting self. No sooner did these reports reach me than, to learn particulars, I went to Captain Mellish's commanding officer, who had formerly been a member of the Cosmopolite Club, and an intimate acquaintance of mine. I found him so engaged with preparations for proceeding to St. Sebastian, for which place the regiment was under orders, that I could scarcely command his attention; however, in a few hasty words, he expressed how much he was annoyed at the whole business, that, though wild and imprudent, he knew Mellish to be man of the strictest probity and romantic honour; that the serjeant was a rascal; but still if the money were not immediately paid, a proceeding which would at once satisfy all parties, he must perforce enter into an inquiry, which would inevitably end in a court martial; and as Mellish had certainly received large sums of money, and as

no doubt the serjeant, abetted by witnesses, would have no hesitation in swearing that at the period Fitz O. had not been himself; and as the whole business seemed to have awakened a feeling in the regiment against Mellish, he much feared the result would prove unfavourable, and that he would be obliged to quit the service."

"And what, Colonel, do you think Captain Mellish, in that event, will do?" I demanded.

He replied "Most probably, shoot himself through the head, if he has not some religious scruples to stay his hand. Why, he has not a son to support him, independent of his commission. Then, quitting the army in the midst of this glorious war, and in disgrace, too! I see no other alternative for the poor devil.

"Well, Aigline, these are all the particulars I could acquire; their meagreness, and my total ignorance of military law, will cause you to pronounce, as I myself do, that my intelligence is very unsatisfactory. However, one thing is certain, the inquiry is to commence to-morrow, and there is a powerful party against Mellish, so if he cannot obtain the money almost instantly, I really believe that his fate will be decided; and that," he added, ominously, "it will be a ~~disaster~~."

"Oh, say not so—for mercy's sake, say not so," I replied, bursting into tears. "But, tell me, are there no means by which he may be relieved?"

Surely, the carriage, boat, and dresses that he purchased for me, might be disposed of, and quickly."

He answered, carelessly, "The two former were only hired; and for the latter, their sole value consists in having draped your graceful form, and as the vain Valencians might not consider that, they would not bring doubloons. And as to this palace, Mellish's tenancy of it expired a week ago. I know not what additional charge the Donna may have the conscience to demand for the period."

"Then, my Lord," I exclaimed, in anguish, "am I to understand that Captain Mellish's disgrace is inevitable? Noble, generous youth! would I had perished ere I brought this trouble on you!" and giving way to my feelings, I wrung my hands, and sobbed aloud.

"It is not inevitable, Aigline, if you wish to save him from it."

"If I wish to save him! the word implies a cruel doubt. I call Heaven to witness I would die ere he should suffer this wrong, perhaps disgrace,—and on my account. But I do not possess a ducat. On the fatal evening he met me I was in want of the very necessities of life. Oh, in the days of my thoughtless extravagance how little I dreamt of the mortification, the misery, the almost despair which might arise from the want of that wealth so lavishly squandered!"

"These reflections," he gravely rejoined, "can-

not now remedy the evil. Most people lavish away their best treasures ; and, unhappily, repentance cannot recal them."

He actually heaved a natural sigh, adding, "But enough of these triste reflections ; at present there is no leisure to indulge in them. Aigline, I repeat, the fate of Mellish is in your keeping. Yet I scarcely expect him to be saved, for I place little faith in the sincerity of gratitude, especially in your sex ; for whereas duty, respectability, husband, children, parents, are daily sacrificed to the indulgence of passion, merely because selfish gratification is the result, the offerings of friendship and gratitude, even on the most trivial occasions, are withheld. It is surprising how conscientious and tenacious people become, when they expect no individual advantage or enjoyment to result from what they are called upon to do."

I started up, and actually stamped with anger, as I exclaimed, "Is it still further to irritate, to madden me, that your Lordship, so unlike yourself, goes into this abstruse and ill-timed reasoning ? Say, is it indeed possible for me to assist Captain Mellish ? Let me entreat you to be explicit—this suspense is torturing."

"To say truth, it *has* seemed more like the whine of some grumbling country old parson, than the gallant discourse of a Beletrieve,—a cosmopolite ; but you, Aigline, are impatient and irritable.

Now, command yourself for a few instants, and I shall explain my plan. Observe, my motive is love, and my reward is to be love, or its seeming. I have lived long enough to know that the counterfeit is the more shining and current, so shall content myself with it. And now let me remark that the very first time I presumed to address myself to you, I acknowledged that through interest alone I hoped to gain my point; and, of necessity, this conviction leads me, ere I make any sacrifices, to calculate my own views. Had you been more disposed to listen to me, I had acted differently; but—nay, do not interrupt me, Aigline—I repeat, that, by some infatuation—for such it is—I love you to distraction. Added to this, is the mortification—but I see you cannot command your impatience; let it excuse my abruptness in saying that I came here with the intent of offering you five hundred doubloons, for Captain Mellish's use, annexing a condition——”

He paused. I dashed off his hand, which he had laid on my arm, and uttered an exclamation of contempt.

“No need,” he coldly remarked, “for this violence; on my side there is but a statement of facts; I shall offer nothing further: when I came here I supposed you were interested for Captain Mellish; if I am mistaken, I cannot help it. So, fair Aigline, I shall bid you good night.”

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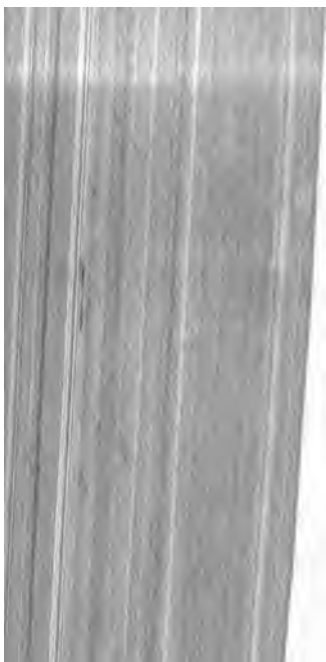
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the money—some of which, it appears was embezzled from the soldiers' pay—while the paymaster was not himself, consequently incapable of doing; and who can prove that the evidence is true or exaggerated? for Captain Mellish admits that he has no witnesses, and the serjeant can produce two. In legal matters private opinion is of no avail, consequently disgrace must be the result. Whether Mellish will survive it none can tell; probably not himself. Nay," he continued, as I attempted to speak, "all further inquiries from me are vain. I again repeat, I know nothing of the forms of military law: how should I?"

"One question more," I exclaimed, as he quitted the apartment; "could the inquiry be postponed?"

"I think not," he coolly replied; "and if it were, what purpose could it answer? for how could Captain Mellish raise so large a sum as three hundred doubloons, particularly now, when doubts of his honour are entertained? Believe me, however we may despise reports, they influence public opinion, and always tell for or against a man; but, to digress, there is no use in dwelling on this subject, it is a mere repetition of what has been already said. As I am aware you think I have rather enlarged the matter, may I suggest that you, who are so ready to expedients, might contrive to see Captain Mellish, and from his own lips learn the particulars; at least my account is confused? One observation



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allowed up by his accusations and justified by Mrs. Fitz O.'s assertions, the inquiry is to be instituted, and any measures you adopt must be immediate: as far as I am concerned, though little accustomed to expose myself to the chill of the opening dawn, ere three I shall return to this saloon to wait your leisure, should you require my assistance; if not, fear no importunity from me, I shall not force my attentions;" then giving his most graceful bow he retired, but in a few moments returned, saying, "Aigline, as I reached my carriage and found Pat Mulcahy in waiting, it occurred that in seeking Captain Mellish he might prove useful, so I have commanded him to remain here; however, I do not press his services, and have given him no orders further than to obey your wishes. Of course it is needless to say that you must not compromise your dignity or mine by placing any unnecessary confidence in such a low fellow. As to my offer of the money it must rest an inviolable secret between us; adieu!" without waiting for an answer he retired.

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vehemently insisted that, if the court-martial sat, Captain Mellish must be cashiered; this account grieved me, for it told too plainly what a strong party the serjeant had gained to his side.

Though fully of Lord Beletrieve's opinion that it was derogatory to place confidence in such a person, still, having no alternative, and to engage his assistance, I admitted to Mulcahy that I was deeply interested in Captain Mellish's fate. He interrupted me, abruptly saying, "Enough, lady; surely every one knew it was to support you that the Captain, before so gentlemanly, embezzled the Paymaster out of his doubloons."

Though greatly shocked, there was no use in resenting a want of delicacy of which he was unconscious, so, concealing my disgust, I proposed that he should take a letter from me to Captain Mellish.

"In the twinkling of an eye," he replied, "but I doubt it is but losing time; mayhap the Captain is under arrest; if not, the chances are ten to one against his being able to come here, so take an old soldier's advice, and if you wish to see him, go yourself."

At first I hesitated, but reflecting that the least suspicion of the money coming through me would lead to inquiries, and prevent Mellish from accepting it, I concluded on going, but in some masculine disguise, for I could not endure the

chance of any person seeing me wandering through the streets with Mulcahy.

In the Donna's palace was a wardrobe filled with a variety of costumes, from the proud Sultan's of the East to the bare-footed Friar's; these, I concluded, had been collected to disguise the gay Valencians during the Carnival. Thither I now adjourned, and wishing my appearance to be as little remarkable as possible, I fixed on the dress of a young peasant. Selecting a long dark-coloured frock, which reached below my knees, and substituting loose trousers for the shorter garment usually worn, I then folded up my hair under a large Montero cap, took in my hand a basket containing some figs, and a couple of bottles of wine, placed a cigar in my mouth, and accompanied by Pat Mulcahy, who expressed his astonishment at my ready metamorphosis, proceeded to the boat, and was soon rowed round to the nearest point to the quarters of Mellish, which were in the vicinity of the castle. Landed, I paused to consult Mulcahy, who advised that I should demand admittance to Captain Mellish, under the plea of his having ordered the wine; meantime he would converse with the guard to acquire more information.

I felt all the awkwardness of entering Mellish's apartment at such an hour, but the press of circumstances presented no alternative; so, request-

ing a soldier to direct me, I hastened up two pair of stairs. Having reached the door, I gently tapped, but receiving no answer, I rapped more loudly; still no notice was taken. Hearing several steps ascending, and dreading to be seen by strangers, I took courage and entered, but found the apartment deserted.

For some moments my confusion stupified me, but finding myself alone I was re-assured, and began to look around. A lamp was burning, but so dimly, it scarcely rendered objects visible; trimming it, I saw a belt, a sword, and other articles of military dress tossed negligently about; and on the table, amidst materials for writing, were a pair of pistols, and several letters. I looked attentively at the letters; one was addressed to you, Freville, and another to the Rev. J. La Franck; no place of residence appeared on either: it seemed at the time Mellish knew not where you were. There was another for the colonel of his regiment, and beside it lay one for me, which was not sealed; I concluded that Mellish, in the very act of directing it, had been called away. There could be no dishonour in reading what was intended for my perusal, so, with trembling fingers, I tore it open; from the emotion I experienced, I could not dwell upon particulars, but never again hoping to see me, and under feelings amounting to despair, poor Mellish gave

utterance to his ill-placed passion ; then, with the refinement which marks his character, avoiding all allusion to his embarrassments, lest I might divine the cause, he merely said that circumstances had placed him in the power of a ruffian who had instituted the most serious charges, and that he apprehended being tried by court-martial; and should disgrace, however unmerited, be the result, he felt that he could not survive. Then, as the only boon he would ever demand for his devoted love, he energetically entreated that I would place myself under the guardianship of La Franck, to whom he had written on the subject, and who he knew was in the Peninsula, though the exact place he had not yet ascertained. Much more there was in the same strain of manly affection; but while I hung over it the door burst open, and a soldier, who appeared half intoxicated, rushed in, and calling out that he was Captain Mellish's servant, peremptorily demanded what brought me there; then swore vehemently at my presuming to examine the papers. Although I had flung down my letter, following up his abuse, and ere I could reply, he rudely caught me by the shoulder, and flung me out of the room. Being very active, I escaped unhurt, and greatly terrified, hastened down to Mulcahy, who was leisurely smoking with the guard. Preserving my presence of mind, I did not mention the soldier's violence, as I

guessed he would resent it, and that a scuffle might ensue, but beckoned him to join me. We had advanced some yards, when I beheld Captain Mellish, accompanied by two other officers, approach; they appeared as though they were returning from the castle, and were in deep conversation; but poor Mellish looked fearfully ill. Secure in my disguise, drawing the Montero cap more closely over my face, I drew near, and heard one of the officers say, "Can nothing be done?" "Impossible," was Mellish's answer, "the serjeant has made out a most plausible case, and will swear through thick and thin that I obtained the money in a most ungentlemanly manner, probably in a roguish one, for he is a determined ruffian."

"I thought I saw him enter your apartment this morning," remarked the other officer, "what could the rascal want?"

"The money," answered Mellish, impatiently. "Only think, what a villain! being alone with me, which removed all apprehension of witnesses, he said that if I could procure the three hundred doubloons he would withdraw from the whole business; that he did not care a rap for honour, or the opinion of the regiment; and having had enough of fighting, would be very glad to be dismissed out of the service before the siege of St. Sebastian."

"And what answer did you make?" inquired the officer.

"That if he would not tempt me to fire my pistol through his head, he would decamp; and as the fellow is as arrant a coward as ever breathed he took my advice."

"Would to Heaven, Mellish, you could possess the money," said his friend; "if I possessed it you should not have occasion to ask me for it. Is there no person who could assist you?"

"There are two," he replied, "who would do so willingly, and who possess ample means; but one is on the distant seas, the Pacific, if I mistake not; and unfortunately for me, the other, Sir Freville Deerhurst, who was in Tarragona with General Murray, in place of embarking with most of the troops for Alicant, was sent to command some of the out-posts; and I have not been able to learn where he is stationed."

"And what is to be done?" anxiously demanded the officer.

"Trial — disgrace — ruin — death awaits me," frantically exclaimed Mellish, as he struck his hand against his sword. By this time they had reached his quarters, and entered together.

* * * *

My resolution was taken — the struggle was over. I would save Mellish by the immolation of every hope. Oh! this sacrifice of self, when unsup-

Ported by enthusiasm, is dreadful—and friendship is too pure for passion. I saw the guard had been relieved; I pressed my repeater; it chimed a quarter past two. I signified to Mulcahy to assist me to the boat, for I was unequal to support myself; he obeyed, and placed me in it. I dropped my handkerchief in the waves, and with it wiped off the cold drops of anguish that gathered on my brow. The sun was not yet risen, but its first dawn of brightness was being reflected over the horizon; it lighted our path, and we soon reached the Donna's palace. There, in the saloon, Lord Beletrieve patiently, calmly, had awaited my return. Forgetful of my masculine attire, forgetful of everything but the shame, the ruin, to which I was going to consign myself, I staggered into the room. He rose and politely led me to a seat, and with good taste avoided all expressions of kindness. He then pressed me to take some wine. A passion of tears in which I freely indulged revived, though it could not compose me. He had placed me near a table; leaning my face over my crossed arms, I avoided looking at him. After a few moments, in his bland monotonous tone he said, "Aigline, I regret that time obliges me to press you on a distressing subject. Just say, have you seen Captain Mellish, and what is the result? And, Aigline, in the absorption of your own feelings, do not totally overlook that I

too may feel. Think you there is no suffering in thus gaining the only woman whom I ever sincerely loved? Your influence over me amounted to fascination, else I never could so far have descended from all dignity as to take the ignoble step I have done. If your friendship, or gratitude, or whatever else you may please to term it, for Captain Mellish leads you to this sacrifice—oh! why must I call it such?—be generous, and do it nobly! There is a want of heroism in your manner which ill suits the high spirit of your actions.”

“You are right, Lord Beletrieve,” I replied, rising, “it *is* beneath me to go about whining; but no,” I vehemently exclaimed, “nothing is beneath me, for I am sinking into the very lowest abyss of shame and misery!” and I wildly beat my bosom.

“Stop!” he cried violently grasping my arm, “another exclamation of that kind,—another expression of coldness or disdain, and I swear by every power, that though I saw you and this Mellish perishing by slow tortures, I would not advance a sous to save you! Aigline, in your egotism how dare you forget it is Lord Beletrieve you insult! Truly it is I who have fallen, when you address me in such language.” He paced up and down, trying to conquer his fury, which seemed uncontrollable.

Freville, in good or evil, when you men choose to exercise your authority, we are but as helpless children before you. I actually trembled with terror, and methinks one word more of anger or of kindness on Lord Beletrieve's part had so terrified or disgusted me, that I should have left Mellish to his fate. Perhaps in his keen comprehension of the workings of the human mind, he guessed as much; for struggling to assume calmness, he said, "Aigline, forgive my ungentlemanly violence: you provoked me to it;—to avoid a similar error I shall now retire. Here," he said, laying down a purse which fell heavily on the table, "this contains the five hundred doubloons. Should you accept them, to relieve Captain Mellish from his embarrassments, you know the conditions,—no need of painful repetitions; of all things observe my name is not to appear." He bowed gracefully and retired.

I heard the door close after him with regret I almost wished to recal him, in the vain hope that he would press me forward to the desperate act I meditated. Oh! this weakness of a woman's mind, that seeks in others an excuse for her follies or crimes. Left solely to my own decision, the conflict was terrible; but at length the fearful idea that ere the sun, then rising so gloriously above the blue waters of the Mediterranean, should again set, Mellish might be driven to the unhallowed

act of suicide, and on my account—determined me, and I summoned Mulcahy to my presence. I must have looked very ill, for, as he entered, he exclaimed, in a tone of terror, “Lady, you are ~~ill~~—dying!”

In a voice scarcely articulate, I uttered, “No, but I am very wretched.”

“Can I do anything to serve you?” he replied, with feeling.

“Much, Mulcahy. I must see Captain Mellish.”

“Nothing so easy,” he replied, readily; “I will again row you to his quarters ere the present hour is past.”

“Thank you,” I answered. “Has Lord Beltrieve yet gone? If not, I would speak to him.”

Without answering, he retired; a few moments and his Lordship entered. He, too, must have been startled by my appearance. I sat cold and pale as a statue, with my hair (for I had thrown off my cap) hanging about my shoulders. He advanced, and seating himself by my side, in kind, soft accents, he observed—

“My poor Aigline, this struggle is too much for you; I shall be glad when it is over.”

He handed me some wine, I rejected it, and swallowing a glass of water, said mildly, “My Lord, I have decided on accepting your gift”—I could not avoid a shudder—“add to your kindness by advising me how I should proceed in present-

g it to Captain Mellish. You will not permit a confidant, and I am unequal to think for myself."

"In the expectation of all this," he answered, "I have made arrangements. In the first place, your present costume, probably you would be refused admittance, so let Mulcahy put the gown and cowl of a priest in a basket; over them he can throw some figs. When near Captain Mellish's quarters you must put them on; and unless the portness of your stature in male attire attracts notice, you have nothing to fear, and I have observed two or three priests from Murcia who are remarkably short; and as the times are so stirring, and the hour so early, I hope you will escape observation. If so, demand boldly to see Captain Mellish. In your sacred dress none will deny you admittance."

He paused, and going to a table, wrote the following words:—"A sincere friend hearing of Captain Mellish's embarrassment, sends him five hundred doubloons, for which no thanks but their acceptance and use will *ever* be required."

"Do you approve of this?" he said, handing it to me. I signified my assent. He sealed and directed it, observing, "As you hope to serve your friend, let your interview be short, else you will betray yourself."

With these words he retired, and the next moment I heard his carriage drive off. Soon

after Mulcahy entered with a large basket in his hand.

"Madam," he said, "Lord Beltrive has given me directions relative to your visit to Captain Mellish, and I have sworn never to betray you."

I sighed, but made no reply. In a respectful tone he continued, "Madam, the Valenciennes are early people, and the *réveille* of the British cavalry will soon be sounded; so if you do not hasten, whatever your business, you will be late."

I started from my seat, and prepared to follow, but he checked me by remarking, "Madam, you had better fasten up your hair; it must be tidy, or it will not fit under the cowl."

I passively obeyed. He then handed me the Montero cap, and without further delay I quitted the Donna's palace. The boat was in readiness. I observed that it was manned by four rowers, though in general there were but two. Mulcahy acted as pilot, and we bounded swiftly over the buoyant waters. On reaching the shore, I proceeded some distance, and then, sheltered by a clump of trees, put on the gown and cowl, and proceeded as rapidly as my trembling limbs would carry me to Mellish's quarters. On reaching them I demanded to see him, and was instantly directed to his apartment. Cautiously opening the door, I entered unobserved.

He sat by the table writing, and as I stood before him, I observed he was adding some lines to the letter addressed to myself; and once or twice he sighed almost convulsively. As he stood up to seal his letter I obtained a full view of his countenance; it looked ghastly, but the livid hue in some degree might proceed from the cold morning light which, forcing its way through the half-closed shutters, intermingled with that of the unextinguished lamp; but independent of his paleness, his whole appearance bore that look of abandonment which results from hopeless affliction. His hair was dishevelled; his generally open brow contracted into gloom: without taking off his uniform he had thrown aside his stock, and opened his shirt-collar, as if for freer respiration. While I continued sadly gazing on him, he pressed the cover on which my name was written passionately to his lips, then, resuming his seat, placed all the letters in a row. Having done so, he raised one of the pistols to examine it. This horrified me: with difficulty I suppressed a cry as, standing before him with a low obeisance, I handed the note which Lord Beletrieve had written, at the same time placing the purse of doubloons on the table. All this was the work of a minute, the next, and ere he had recovered from his surprise, I glided from the apartment; and to prevent pursuit or discovery, took the precaution of locking

the door from the outside. On reaching the court, I found Mulcahy in waiting. "Returned so soon, Madam!" he said, in a tone of surprise, "I guess you did not find the Captain at home."

I felt miserably sick; cold damps were gathering on my brow. In faint accents I exclaimed, "Take me to the boat: I would be at rest."

"It is gone back," he replied; "but a carriage is in waiting, I suppose by your own orders; was it not so, madam?"

Too ill and agitated to notice his words, I again demanded to be taken to some place of rest. Seeing me stagger from very weakness, he supported me and proceeded, but at a gentle pace, down several streets which lay in the direction opposite the sea-shore. All the while I was quite passive, almost insensible: at length, on reaching the corner of a square, I saw a carriage in waiting; Mulcahy opened the door, and, assisting me to enter, immediately closed it. At this moment I fainted. I have said enough, my story is at an end.

CHAPTER VI.

AIGLINE's narrative awakened my sympathy. I was not weak enough to defend her conduct, but I compassionated the untoward circumstances which had impelled her on to crime. No longer viewing her in the light of a vain, volatile being, incapable of strong attachments, my thoughts dwelt on her sufferings, with a warmth of tenderness such as I had not experienced towards her since we had parted in London; and I resolved, if possible, to create in her bosom a love equal to that she acknowledged to have felt for d'Estonville Howard; but the proud, though erring heart, which in my execrable vanity I had so severely wounded, never again expanded towards me; and she repelled all my advances to regain her confidence, with a bitterness and contempt which made me shrink back on myself. "Freville," she would say, "you deceive yourself, but not me: whatever of love your nature was capable of containing is buried with Clara Arnheim. To you I have ever been the object of vanity—long your master passion—else, why did you so soon become

ennuyé'd by my society? and if you now value me, it is because you dread the rivalry of Charles Mellish." At times when provoked beyond endurance at her sarcasm, I retaliated, she would grow quite furious; but these fits were variable in their effects. Sometimes yielding to hysterics or uttering doleful cries, at others, assuming the manner of a bacchante, she would dance and sing, exclaiming, "Freville, there must be no fine sentiment between us—no reminiscences of past weal or woe; let our dead rest in peace—I would not, if I could, recal mine to witness my disgrace—not that they could curse me so deeply, so darkly, as I do myself:—no, no, there must be no sympathies, no memories, between us: let us clothe ourselves in folly as in a garment, and dance through the world, shaking our caps and bells; my race will soon be over: I have divided my life into acts—joining you was the fourth; the fifth and last is rapidly advancing; events prove it must end in tragedy;—but, mark me, your taper spirit will still linger on in its dubious course." Whenever she proceeded in this manner, I trembled for her reason; indeed, her excess of sensibility and remorse, stimulated by the use of laudanum, propelled her sometimes to the very verge of madness.

Though I had experienced more overwhelming afflictions, still at no period of my life was I more

exquisitely miserable than then. True, I was surrounded by all the adventitious circumstances of wealth, but I possessed not one friend; and in spite of all the vain casuistry with which I strove to soothe myself, I actually trembled when I reflected on the writhing contempt of Mellish; the stern though christianlike censures of La Franck; and worse, a thousand times worse than both, the reproaches of George Tennent, when he saw or heard of me as the partner in guilt of his beloved sister. And these men, highly distinguished and honoured in society, had been my early companions and friends; had shown me every preference, placing in me unlimited confidence; and they were closely allied to Aigline, either by the ties of friendship, love, or relationship, and each would have died to defend, to uphold her, and I—I durst not follow up the subject.

One thing embarrassed me. Should I acquaint Aigline of her brother's gift? Rendered independent of me, would she continue in the disgraceful position she so deeply execrated? It may be said, from the little happiness we enjoyed together, should I not have considered our separation rather as a release? This is one of the questions upon which I cannot let her satisfy others nor myself. I had often found her an innovation on my time and pleasures; nay, frequently, as visions of ambition created discontent, I soothed my self-love by

fancying that but for her I might have started forth on a political career—my proudest wish—with some *éclat*. Yet now, when an opportunity offered, I could not endure the idea of parting from her, and perhaps seeing her united to Mellish; an event, from the excess of his passion, I considered by no means improbable. It is needless to dwell upon the conflict awakened by these reflections; I really felt and looked miserably ill. Poor Aigline, whose heart even disgrace could not indurate, alarmed by my appearance, and trembling for my health, forgot my selfishness, and tended me with all a woman's tenderness; this affected me deeply, and at length awakened me to a sense of her character and my own injustice.

In this manner a few days elapsed. Engrossed by the hope of attaching Aigline, I had entirely forgotten Mellish's threat of disposing of his commission, to acquit himself of all pecuniary obligation to me, until I was alarmed by a letter from La Franck, stating that, preparatory to his accompanying Captain Mellish to England, he purposed calling upon Mrs. McMisserton, to learn her decision as to the disposal of the money forwarded for her use by Captain Tennent. Any equivocation or delay with La Franck, I knew to be vain, as he would immediately resort to legal measures; and to keep Aigline any longer in ignorance was impossible; so I resolved to acquaint her with the

circumstance, plead the excess of my attachment, apologize for any offence I had given, and throw myself on her mercy. Should this plea fail, I would represent, that by the 5000*l.* alone could she save Mellish from the necessity of selling his commission. Thus, a second time, her generous nature was to be used as a weapon against herself. Having arranged my plans, and the method by which Mellish could be deceived into keeping his position, I waited until evening to acquaint her and, in spite of all my calculating selfishness, as the hour of explanation approached, from the known violence of her passions, actually trembled for the result.

It is now needless to record the scene which ensued. On first hearing of her brother's noble gift, Aigline yielded to an excess of grief and remorse perfectly agonizing, and then her every wish seemed to merge into the hope of never again meeting him. "He will hear of my shame," she exclaimed; "a thousand tongues forked by envy will proclaim it to tarnish his honours; but, Freville, his eyes shall never be blasted by seeing me. Oh, God! when we last parted, as kneeling I offered up fervent prayers for his speedy return, how little I thought it would fill me with affliction, and that I should ever wish to fly to earth's utmost verge to shun him!" So absorbing was her grief, that all memory of his gift was forgotten, till I

gently reminded her of it, adding, "Aigline, prove your confidence in my love so far as to reject it, and I swear instantly to settle on you four times the sum: this will render you even more independent, and I shall derive the reward of at least awakening your gratitude."

There was something scornful in the expression of her countenance, as she replied, "George's gift would free me from the trammels of vice—you strengthen the chain. However, for the present I shall accept of neither; my generous brother sent his to an impoverished, not an erring sister; under such circumstances, I do not feel warranted in accepting it without entering into explanations. However, I shall see La Franck tomorrow,—though the meeting will be most painful,—and arrange my future plans with him; and now, Freville, while I unhesitatingly decline it, accept my thanks for your liberal offer." She was retiring, but confident that her intention was to remove herself from under my roof, ungenerous as I felt my conduct, I resolved to follow the example of Lord Beletrieve, and by working on her best feelings, still detain her in unholy bondage. Yet I was not villain enough not to be shocked at my degrading purpose, and my voice was almost inarticulate as, gently taking her hand, I said, "Aigline, all this time I have forgotten to mention that Mellish is going to London to the

Horse Guards to dispose of his commission ; it is needless to add, that it will reduce him to absolute poverty."

With much agitation she exclaimed, "Oh ! how could I be so selfish as to forget his interest ? but the recital of my misery obliterated from my memory the circumstance which led to its avowal. Freville, I thank you for reminding me ere I refused George's gift, which I shall now accept without compunction, and devote to the noble purpose of saving Mellish—certain that the act will meet George's full approbation."

"It is kindly said," I replied, trying to speak calmly ; "but you must know enough of Colonel Mellish to be aware that, under no extremity would he now accept of any obligation from you ; and a man of less refined feelings must consider it highly dishonourable to devote to his own purposes money entrusted to him under such peculiar circumstances. It would be a breach of confidence of which he is incapable, and to which I never would consent. Nay, dear Aigline," I continued, "do not look so distressed ; only promise not to desert me, and to forget, if possible, any unkindness I may have shown towards you, and which I call heaven to witness was the result of temper, not want of attachment, as, with the exception of Clara Arnheim, you have ever held the first place in my affections,—only promise

this, and I shall make arrangements by which Colonel Mellish may liquidate his debt to me without disposing of his commission."

The ardour of my manner, by proving how solicitous I was to retain her society, gratified, and, I believe, surprised her; for she quickly replied, "Freville, you relieve my mind from an inquietude. Latterly, I have often thought that you considered me as an incumbrance; this idea embarrassed, humiliated me beyond measure; for even in my fallen state there are degrees of wretchedness. Should I continue with you, one request I shall add—that you will, at any trouble, any inconvenience, save me from seeing George; however, I make no promise, till after my interview with La Franck."

Having gained so much I worked on her not to see La Franck, for I dreaded least his high religious principle and profound reasoning, supported by an eloquence which already began to gain the admiration of thousands, and ultimately led him to the highest honours in his profession, might persuade her to quit my protection. I knew that the same ill-regulated enthusiasm which had sunk her into vice, if well directed, would guide her back to virtue; and so profound was my selfishness, sooner than submit to the struggle of our separation, that even with the prospect of her brother's return, I resolved to detain her.

For this purpose, I explained that if she granted La Franck a meeting, he would of course acquaint George with all the circumstances, and suggested that she should immediately write to decline seeing him; to decline, likewise, the 5000*l.*; that done, I would remove her from Paris to London, arrange at the Horse Guards about Mellish's commission, after which I would accompany her to any place she appointed. This last offer was decisive; yielding to one of her ecstasies, she expressed her ardent desire to quit Europe, and proceed to Pondicherry, where she would be removed from every possible chance of ever meeting her brother.

Though by no means participating in the happiness she anticipated in quitting Europe, I offered no objection, and was pleased at once again seeing her beautiful countenance lighted up by hope. Yet I sighed, as in her unreflecting vivacity, she expatiated on all the pleasures that would attend us in the East; speaking as if, with change and country, all former recollections and sorrows could be obliterated. Thus again, a second time, the gorgeous palace of Sir Roger became the ideal scene of my unhallowed love.

On the following morning she wrote to La Franck. I proposed dictating her letter, but she objected; and as I observed that while writing she wept bitterly, I did not persist; for her tem-

per had become so irritable and capricious, that I feared under the least opposition she would desert me.

As she sealed her letter she said, "Freville, although I have declined La Franck's visit and George's offer, still, without making any mention as to our intention of quitting France, or casting the least reproach on you, I have admitted that I am miserable, wretched beyond a good man's belief; and I have solemnly entreated of him and Mellish never to expose me to George, but if possible disguise it from him, explaining my intention of shunning every place where we were likely to meet."

I somewhat angrily expatiated on the folly of placing such uncalled-for confidence in La Franck, observing that if she even felt unhappy in her position, it would be more prudent to disguise it.

"Prudence and I!" she repeated with a bitter laugh—"but fear not, Freville, I shall be the liveliest of the lively—

"The light unmeaning thing,
That smiles with all, and weeps with none."

Yet," she continued, "the heart naturally yearns after sympathy, and I know La Franck will mourn for me—perhaps offer up a prayer for mercy to my suffering soul—and you, Freville, would deny me this solitary hope!" As she uttered these

As she quitted the apartment. In such moods reasoning was vain, so I dispatched the letter then issued orders for our departure, which I hoped should take place on that evening. By expedition, I hoped to elude all interference or remonstrance from La Franck.

CHAPTER VII.

THE pleasure experienced throughout England by the restoration of peace seemed to have changed the national character. Wherever we stopped, we met numbers either returning from the Continent to meet expecting friends, or hurrying there to visit the blood-stained scenes of the late war. An air of gaiety was diffused over every countenance, and the bright summer season accorded well with the feeling of universal happiness.

On reaching London, Aigline and I found it still crowded by foreigners of distinction. Circumstances which it is needless to recount, had, while in Paris, won for me the friendship of Prince Metternich, who now honoured me by a particular introduction to the Emperor of Russia and his august sister. This exalted my overweening vanity, and I resolved to surround myself with regal magnificence. For this purpose, I hired a noble residence; and in despite of the shrugs and insinuations of Mr. Monymore, who was per-

astonished at the facility with which I squandering the old Nabob's much-valued of rupees, I set up an immense establish-

had brought from Spain six superior Andalusian horses, of rather a small breed. Two of these presented to the Regent, who honoured me by acceptance and his notice. He also claimed personal introduction to Aigline, of whom he spoke as being the most perfectly beautiful woman he had ever seen. All this was very flattering, and brought me into such repute, that I had the satisfaction of seeing myself sought and received as the favourite of princes. It was in truth a strange change from the period I lived in a sordid lodging, with no friend or companion; and there was something boyish in the feeling which led me to drive Aigline in my appointed phaeton, drawn by four spirited horses, to see the dwelling which had sheltered my infancy.

The position I now held, supported by wealth, gratified my every object. Immediately on being introduced to the Regency, his Royal Highness reinstated the Duke of York in his former office of commander-in-chief,—the illness of Sir David Dundas affording the opportunity for doing an act of justice. This was favourable to my plans. I requested an audience of the duke; it

was graciously granted, and he received me as one patronised by his august brother. Charmed by his condescension, in as few words as the case admitted, I acquainted him that in former days Colonel Mellish and I had been schoolfellows and friends; consequently on coming in for Sir Roger Deerhurst's property, I had presented him with his troop, which he unhesitatingly accepted; but that since, some disagreement having arisen between us in Paris, with all the impetuosity and pride of his country, taking advantage of the peace, he was going to dispose of his commission—his sole dependence—to repay me. And I concluded by representing that from my great wealth the money was no possible object; but that Colonel Mellish to my entreaties and apologies remained obdurate.

Now, although in this simple statement, I had no intention of gaining on royal favour, the duke warmly shaking my hand, expressed his approbation of what he chose to term my magnanimous method of acting towards one who had quarrelled with me, offering to act as a friend between us to bring about a reconciliation. So fixed was he in this purpose, that I was at length compelled to acquaint him that the disagreement had arisen in jealousy; and Colonel Mellish, being such a hot-headed Irishman, I was confident that even his highness's interference, howsoever it would honour

us both, could only widen the breach and lead to a duel; a result I was solicitous to avoid.

Being at length convinced, with a shake of his head he gravely said, "It is ever thus: women rise between us and our best purposes, dissolving the ties of friendship; it is our weakness, Sir Freville," he added smiling, "and wise observations on the subject are out of date, moreover ungallant; so I promise to act according to your wishes." I would have thanked him, but he graciously said, "Independent of the pleasure of obliging you, I should be sorry to lose such a soldier as Colonel Mellish." I then bade my adieu, saying that the price of the troop should be lodged at my agent's; and returned with feelings of gratitude for, and admiration of, the urbanity of my noble commander.

Although, as the season was passed, my saloons were supposed to offer the only remaining attraction that remained in London, still I was impatient to be off; and Aigline daily urged me on the subject; so I resolved to delay only till Mr. Monymore arranged his accounts, and a vessel in which we purposed to sail to the East, was fitted up for our reception.

About this period, we received an intimation of old General McMisserton's death. It greatly annoyed and embarrassed me; for I dreaded, lest in the haughtiness or caprice of her temper,

Aigline might expect me to marry her, and I feared this the more, as in that case, on her brother's return, she could, without hesitation, receive him; and I knew they were fondly attached. Then going to the East as Lady Deerhurst, would alter the whole colour of her destiny. On the other hand, my reason revolted from uniting myself to a woman such as Aigline. Good heaven! how could I, whose ideas of female excellence and dignity had been founded on the pure religious character of Clara Arnheim, give my name, and place my honour in the keeping of such a being? It was then, that, for the first time, I fully experienced the vast difference of the power over a man's mind, be he ever so licentious, swayed by a truly virtuous woman, or one who has disregarded the wise ordinances of society. Even in her silent tomb, my memory dwelt upon Clara with respectful tenderness; while amidst the excellence of her living beauty, the fascinations of her accomplishments and superior talents, I only viewed Aigline as a creature to be pitied, and shall Freville Deerhurst presume to say it—despised.

The McMisserton's death disturbed the harmony which since our arrival in England had existed between us. It were impossible for me now to say what passed in Aigline's mind, or whether she ever admitted the wish of uniting

te to mine; but dreading her influence, and on weakness, I began to shun her society, seeing less company at home, pleaded engagements. No doubt her quick penetration divined my thoughts, and oh! what her spirit must have suffered at the consciousness of being so despised, and by me! Too shy to express her mortification, she assumed a staid, a greater volatility of manner, supplanting it by a freer indulgence in laudanum. It kept her in a constant fever of excitement: her appetite was gone, but her colour was so rich, her eyes so sparkling, how could I suspect that beneath—the decline of a broken heart—lay such a bright exterior.

A few days after we had heard of the McMiss's death, Mc Duff Gower arrived in London. I came to arrange with Aigline about her joining, and nothing could be more gentlemanlike and liberal than his conduct. At first she was much shocked at the meeting, but after a while cheered up and seemed to find a pleasure in his society; he undoubtedly was a fine soldierly-looking man, possessed of great vivacity, my unreasoning and selfish jealousy was aroused, and this increased almost to madness when, having announced that the preparations for our voyage to the East would be concluded on the following day, Aigline mildly but peremptorily declared

her resolution of not accompanying me; observing, that being rendered independent by her jointure, it was her intention to seek some retirement.

Though she was too proud to make any allusion to my not having proposed marriage, in some degree I imputed her intention of quitting me to her disappointment; and though it did not change my views on the subject, I determined to spare no pains to detain her. However, my temper had become so ungovernable that, one day, losing all command over it, I accused her of loving Mc Duff. This shocked her, and justly—for it was not so, she being perfectly sincere in her expressed intention of retiring to some solitude; and she reproached me with bitterness. I retaliated; and for some days a scene of quarrelling ensued. Perhaps it was from witnessing this, that Mc Duff imbibed a prejudice against me: he could scarcely command his dislike even in my presence, while he treated Aigline in a manner at once respectful and tender; such, in short, as her brother might have assumed. Indeed, there was one thing remarkable in the fate of this most unhappy being—that even in her position, amidst the levity of her wild manner, there occasionally appeared such touches of deep feeling, of respect for the virtue she had outraged, and of heart-rending remorse, that several, even amidst my intimate acquaintances—chosen as they were for their

attributes of rank or fashion, not for any moral excellence—treated her with marked kindness, which amounted almost to respect, and excited a lively interest in her fate. But I must listen over these uninteresting details, and come once to the scenes which led to our separation.

It was on the 15th of September.—Well do I remember the day, for its events were engraven on my heart by an undying sorrow. The morning rose in a'1 its autumnal softness; and as I sat at breakfast with Aigline, with more of kindness than I had for some time displayed, I proposed her accompanying me to the Park, which, in consequence of the arrival of two Persian princes, who generally rode there in their eastern costumes, was more than ever frequented. At first she hesitated, but ultimately consented. She was a very graceful horse-woman, and rode inimitably; and I kept for her express use two beautiful horses, but her favourite was a dappled grey mare of exquisite form, and so spirited, that few women could have ventured the attempt to manage her.

While we still conversed, Mc Duff, who in despite of my stern looks and cold manner, had, whenever he chose, the entrée of my house, where he was sure of being well received by Aigline, entered. He looked anxious and confused, and my jealousy imputed this to his having expected a tête-à-tête, and I rather enjoyed his discomfiture.

Aigline, not observing the alteration in his countenance, began to speak with a forced gaily manner, for latterly all her cheerfulness had been assumed. Her once naturally buoyant spirit was crushed never again to expand to happiness. At first he attempted to ward her off, and for some time a playful repartee passed between them; but the hearts of both were oppressed, and it soon died away. All the time I had observed a sullen silence, tossing over the newspapers without reading a line. To relieve the evident awkwardness, McDuff addressing me, began to converse of the Princess of Wales, whose cause at the period excited the interest of Great Britain, and formed the leading topic in every society. Observing that he supported the Princess's cause, to mortify him, independent of my private affection for the Regent, whose condescending kindness commanded my kindness, I resolved to censure her conduct, and uphold the Regent and Queen Charlotte. Words grew warm between us—our argument receiving an impetus from the dislike we harboured to each other. My condemnation of the Princess amounted to virulence; while the noble Scot upheld her with a spirit of romantic chivalry worthy of his high descent. At length, provoked at an observation he made on the want of gallantry in speaking ill of a lady and a queen, even if she merited the insult; I exclaimed, scornfully,

“Pshaw, when a woman, no matter what her rank, loses her self-respect, she cannot expect to be esteemed, nor is it a bad regulation of society, that she is not.”

I paused, for a sigh burst from Aigline, who, without joining in our conversation, had been attentively listening. On the instant we both turned towards her, and spite of the self-command she had latterly acquired, the tears rolled rapidly down her glowing cheeks;—she had seldom wept, for her proud heart struggled against its sufferings; and now, as I beheld the expression of unutterable woe that pervaded her countenance, I inwardly cursed myself for permitting my empty jealousy to lead on to language insulting to her unhappy position; had we been alone, even on my knees, I would have entreated forgiveness for the inadvertency; but in the presence of Mc Duff, I could not endure such humiliation, so I remained silent. Not so he:—in a voice hoarse from subdued anger, he cried, “Mrs. Mc Misserton, as the widow of my deceased uncle, I have a just right to guard you from insult; let me then entreat that you will quit the protection of Sir Freville Deerhurst, who, whatever your errors, must be void of all sensibility thus to wound you.”

I turned fiercely on him; but ere I could speak, recovering her self-command, Aigline dashed the tears from her eyes, and in soft accents said,—

“Mc Duff, if you really entertain any regard for one so unworthy, avoid, on my account, all quarrelling; it would greatly aggravate my misery, which, alas! nothing can alleviate.” She paused; then with a forced laugh, which almost amounted to an hysterical one, added, “besides, my proud Scot, you have the worst of the argument—Sir Freville has reason on his side—you are full of chivalry and romance; and, strange as it may appear, I not only feel, but respect, the stern truth: that a woman who forgets her own self-respect, can never be esteemed, not even by him for whose love the sacrifice was made. In vain would poetical illusion struggle to cast a halo around vice. So, Mc Duff, reserve your eloquence and good sword for a better cause, than upholding one who is a reproach to her sex, and a curse to all connected with her; and, mark me, I have courage enough to support the evil I have drawn on myself.” As she spoke, she drew up her person to its full height, folded her arms, and threw into her beautiful features a look of calm but stern resolution.

Mc Duff gazed on her with a mixture of admiration and pity, then in soothing accents said, “Mrs. McMisserton, that one of your proud heroic nature could by any circumstances be led on to error, appears so extraordinary, that my wonder at it can only be exceeded by surprise,

that any man acquainted with your many noble qualities and misfortunes, could so far forget himself as to insult you. By heavens, it is passing strange! Yet, if you continue to respect Sir Freville Deerhurst, it will be more wonderful still." He was retiring with a slow step and haughty air; but resuming her volatile manner, Aigline bounded after him, exclaiming, "Oh, come, my gentle Scot, we have had enough of these heroics; say, will you join our ride in the Park? the whole London world are to be there."

He appeared confused, but in a hurried voice replied, "Certainly, if you wish it particularly."

She looked inquiringly into his face, then laying her hand on his, said, smiling, "I have not as yet lost my powers of divination. It was kind of you, sooner than wound my feelings, to consent to my thoughtless request. Certes, it would not do to have the prudent, modest, Scotch wife hear in her highland home, that her laird was gallantly escorting me through the Park,—it might lead to much confusion. Now, McDuff, confess—was I not right when I said that you were too much guided by romance? But I, too, can be generous, and will not permit your attendance."

He sighed as he answered; "Mrs. Mc Misser-ton, how unfortunate that you, so considerate for others, should have neglected your own happiness. However, in respect of this same ride, my express

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lowing him, I said, "Captain Gower, after what has occurred, you must expect to hear from me to-morrow."

"To-night, if you please," he retorted; "but before I go, I would explain my motive for advising Mrs. McMisserton not to ride in the park." So saying, he leant towards me to whisper something.

But Aigline, seeing us in conversation, darted forward, and with gentle violence was pushing him out. At the same time, in a haughty voice, I said, "Excuse me, Captain Gower, but I must return to my company." He looked distressed, but having no alternative, quitted the house.

It was some time before Aigline again joined me in the breakfast-parlour, where I remained conversing with my visitors, most of whom were partisans of the Regent. She was dressed in her riding habit, and wore a hat: both were very plain, but the style of dress was particularly becoming to her, and she looked so beautiful, that all present gazed with admiration. This distressed me, for I at once discovered she had been indulging in her habit of taking laudanum, and consequently, was much excited; apprehensive lest others might observe it, I rang for our horses and hastened with her to the park.

It was late when we reached there, and amidst a brilliant cortége we saw the Duke of York on

horseback, accompanied by the Persian princes, and a large party of noblemen and field-officers. As we passed on, his Royal Highness saluted us graciously; and as I returned the honour, my empty vanity was gratified by the remarks made on our horses, which, in truth, could not be equalled in England. Aigline too had been saluted by the Commander-in-chief and his party, while her brilliant style of beauty so awakened the admiration of the Persians, that they burst forth into an extravagance of praise quite oriental in its expression; and at the duke's desire, one of his aides-de-camp rode forward to acquaint her, and at the same time to invite me to spend the evening with his Royal Highness. All this was very flattering; and surrounded by a dashing set of fashionables, we rode cantering and curvetting through the park, exciting the admiration, and no doubt envy of many who, dazzled by outward show and our merry mood, considered us superlatively happy. Yet perhaps at the period, London among its myriads, contained not one more essentially miserable than poor Aigline.

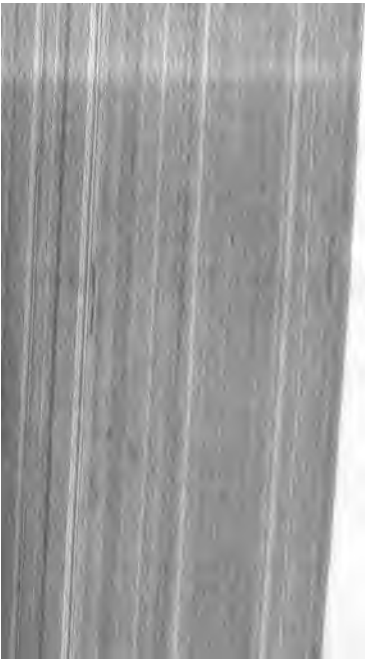
The royal party retired early in the afternoon, but Aigline, who was in one of her gayest moods, still pressed me to stay. We were moving slowly to rest our tired steeds, when we saw Colonel Mellish and La Franck riding forward, and so engaged in conversation as not to perceive us until

nearly face to face. Roused to observation, the former looked fiercely on me, then casting a look of unutterable scorn on Aigline, turned his horse's head in the opposite direction and rode off. I looked hastily to see how she was affected; she looked much excited, but was speaking rapidly and with forced spirits to some of the party. At that instant, she called out, "A race, a race!" and then amidst shouts of laughter, galloped off.

Though I felt displeased at her levity, I was preparing to follow, when laying his hand on my bridle, La Franck in a gentle tone said, "Freville, let me entreat you to grant me a few moments' attention; my zeal may be importunate, but the motive that urges me on is at least friendly."

These were the first words he had addressed to me since we had been playfellows in Cork. It was the first time also, since my grandfather's death, that I had been simply called "Freville," except by Aigline. Its familiarity and the mild voice spoke to my heart of former days, and the unjust prejudice I had so carefully nurtured vanished, and involuntarily I reached out my hand. La Franck grasped it with emotion, exclaiming, "I thank you, Freville, for this mark of confidence; it is a guarantee that my advice will not be disregarded."

This startled me; resuming my haughty manner I replied, "Mr. La Franck, you can scarcely,



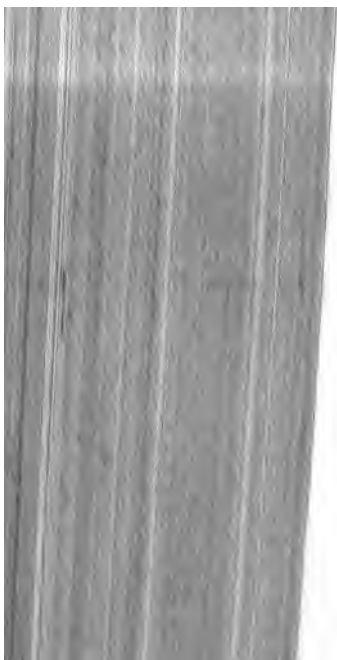
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some untoward circumstance learn the events I have so carefully guarded from his knowledge.' ”

Much agitated, I cried, “When did Sir Egbert Eastville die, and where? and La Franck, as you are a man,—a christian, explain to what events Mellish alludes. I always guessed some mystery hung over Lady Eastville’s last moments.”—I paused, for again the wild rapturous hope that she lived flashed across my thoughts.

La Franck replied, “Freville, I will not deny that Mellish long since confided to my keeping the whole of the unfortunate adventures at the Terrace; but it was under the seal of secrecy, and it is needless to say that nothing can persuade me to cancel my promise; but as I am of opinion that you should be made fully acquainted with every circumstance, I shall use my persuasions with Mellish to consent to my relating them; in the mean time, as you value your own peace of mind, avoid Lord Plinlimmon and the other friends of the departed Sir Egbert, at least till the first glow of feeling for his sad fate is softened down.” So saying, no doubt to avoid further entreaties, he hurried away, while absorbed by a thousand strange fancies, I rode rapidly and heedlessly forward, till my horse, careless as myself, stumbled over a tree which had been cut down and awkwardly left across the path, flinging me forward head over heels and breaking his own knees. Being unin-

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trifles.



CHAPTER VIII.

I WALKED very quick. I know not what time I might have taken; but being much flushed and heated, I turned down the stable lane that led to the back entrance of my residence, and moving rapidly I entered the house unperceived, and going up the front stairs reached the principal saloon; but just as I was going to enter, paused on hearing the voice of McDuff Gower. It seemed he was answering some request of Aigline's, for he distinctly said, "Probably Sir Freville will not return these two hours, and it may be then too late; so let me again implore you to let me take you home. I cannot endure to see you in this state of suffering."

"No, no!" she replied, in a piercing tone, "do not press me; and should he not return in an hour, I will send Llewellyn to acquaint you. In the mean time, go and keep watch; as you hope for mercy do not let him discover me: I could not

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so as to wound her by my contempt and indifference; but the conflicting passion of anger, jealousy, and regret—for I could not solely conquer the latter—were not so easily mastered, and as with steady steps and erect courage I marched into the saloon, I have no doubt that my face, which I felt burning, was perfectly distorted by rage. On seeing me Aigline uttered an exclamation, and made a spring forward, but waiving her back in a moment, though quivering voice, I said, “No acting; no deception; heaven knows you are so lost, that even the seeming show of virtue—of feeling, I could say—may now be laid aside. As to me, to make use of an expression of Mellish’s, my part is over, you are for ever over,” and I turned to go, but she grasped me by the arm, saying, but very indistinctly, for her voice was stifled with emotion, Freville, have you heard of his arrival, and will you not keep your promise?” I interrupted her, fiercely exclaiming, “I have not only heard of, but seen him, and know all; wretched and lost as you are, how dare you cling to me? How dare you look to me for future protection or kindness? Now, that I abhor, detest, renounce you,” and pushing her rudely off, I bounded down the stairs. She uttered one of her doleful cries, then in piercing accents cried out, “Freville, have you no pity; think you I could see him and live? Oh, God! is there no mercy for me? Freville, I claim your

solemn promise." By this time I had reached the hall—she rushing after me—but my heart was hardened against her, and on opening the door, I cast towards her a look of scorn. She was dreadfully flushed and excited, and just as I was going out, fell on her knees, clinging to mine with such force, that I could scarcely disentangle myself from her grasp. Thus we stood in the door-way exposed to any person's observation who chanced to pass down the square. This added shame to my other emotions, and I spoke harshly, very harshly. She attempted to reply, but her speech was gone, and she panted dreadfully, and as her dark dilated eyes were fixed beseechingly upon mine, and as her rich hair, loosed from its comb, fell over her form, she bore a look of abandonment and despair, to which no description can do justice. Strange! that I could gaze upon her and not be softened; but jealousy, from whatever source it springs, is a fearful passion; under its influence, I used my personal strength against the hapless being: raising her from the ground I attempted to place her on her feet, but her struggles prevented me; so laying her gently on the marble floor, I rushed down the steps, first taking the precaution to close the door and to ring the bell, that the servants might attend her. As I did so, I heard a smothered groan, and a kind of gurgling sound. It certainly startled me; but imputing it to efforts to suppress her

sobs, I felt no alarm, but muttering to myself, "She can now elope with her beloved McDuff Gower, her noble Scot. No fear of interruption on my part, for I rejoice to be rid of her. Latterly she has been a great incumbrance, and her temper became so bad. I have been most fortunate in this her new fancy. Lord Beletrieve was right;—these matters always end in some annoyance." As I thus attempted to delude myself—for in truth I was terribly excited—I hurried on till I reached the Green Park. Entering it, I directed my steps towards the north-east angle, and flinging myself on a bench placed beneath a cluster of trees, strove to regain some degree of composure, and to lay down some plan of action. My most engrossing idea was—should I treat Aigline and McDuff with the contempt of appearing perfectly indifferent to their proceedings; or should I call out the latter, and make him answer for his conduct?

It was by this time past eight in the afternoon; the park was deserted of nearly all company except some children, who, with their attendants, still lingered on at play; and while I doubtfully dwelt on the question—should I, or should I not, challenge Captain McDuff Gower, I was attracted by a group of little boys, who were standing on the water's edge, calling out, "Oh—it has escaped—it will be lost; what shall we do?" and so forth.

Involuntarily I looked to see what had occurred, and perceived a fairy yacht with its sails unfurled driving rapidly down the water, a silken cord by which it had been held trailing after. It neared to where I sat, and, with surprise, I beheld the tiny vessel which, under Mr. Tennant's instructions, I had formerly built for Clara Arnheim. Oh, how impossible to give language to the memories connected with the simple toy; my talented enthusiastic mother, the gentle religious Clara, my proud reckless father, the scientific Mr. Tennant, and the gay carol of Aigline, as she dressed its baby crew, rose in review before me, and all, save the latter, were gone,—the sad inhabitants of the silent tomb—and yet how short the period since they had breathed around in life and love, forming my whole of interest and affection! Could it indeed be, that I now only recalled them as the phantoms of imagination; could it be that these my companions, my friends, my beloved ones, were no more? What then to me were earth's vaunted treasures? all bore the impress of sorrow and death. As these thoughts pressed on my awakened fancy—unsupported, unsoothed by one hope of a blessed hereafter, as connected with the departed or myself, I rose from my seat uttering,—“Yes, I will return and again see Aigline: whatever her faults, she shall receive my forgiveness, for she is the last link which connects me”

with the regretted past; and should she be severed from my side the world would soon be a desert; and I am still young, very young;" and as I looked forward to the long period of years I might yet be doomed to linger on, I groaned aloud. At the instant a boy of about seven or eight, clad in very deep but rich mourning, ran towards me, and, seizing me by the hand, exclaimed with vivacity, "Dear sir, perhaps with your cane you would try and stop my little boat; see, it is floating away," and he pointed towards it.

I looked down at the boy, whose face was turned upwards, and, good heaven! it was the image of my lost Clara; and, on the instant, I recognised her eldest son, her first-born, fair and lovely as she herself had been. To remove all doubts, in hasty accents, and catching him by the hand, I exclaimed, "Boy, what is your name, and where did you get that little yacht?"

A bright blush passed over his countenance, and something of his unfortunate father's stateliness appeared in his air, as in an energetic tone of voice, and a manner which evinced that he was offended, he proudly answered, "My name is Egbert Eastville, and the little ship was my mama's, and Mr. Aylsbury gave it to me, and said, I should take great care of it, for that my mama had been very fond of it when alive:" he paused, and then in a tone of entreaty added, "Do, dear:

sir, be so kind as to catch it for me, or perhaps it may sink;" and as he looked up beseechingly he was still more like unto Clara.

"Fear not my dear, dear child," I cried, as I pressed my lips to his forehead; "I would do any thing to oblige, to serve you."

"Oh, you are very good, and I thank you," he interrupted, "but now I need not give you the trouble, for see, there is Mr. Aylsbury, and he will stop it, and he cannot be angry, for he gave me leave to float it." While uttering these words, followed by some of the boys who had been impatiently listening to our colloquy, while others remained at the water's edge watching the yacht, he ran off and joined Mr. Aylsbury who, with Lord Plinlimmon, was slowly advancing. They appeared in deep conversation, but stopped when the children approached, and I saw his Lordship stoop and kiss Egbert, then hook on over a soldier who was loitering about. I guessed that he gave him some money and desired he would catch the yacht, for the soldier hastily threw off his coat, and, it being then in the middle of the summer and at a considerable distance, swam after it. A few moments, and the joyful acclamations of the children as the vessel was safely landed broke on my ears; and their happiness, and the recollection of my own when I too was young and floating the same toy on Glanmire water, increased my de-

pression ;—yet a greater woe than I had yet known awaited me.

In the exciting scene which had passed between Aigline and me, I had totally forgotten La Franck's intelligence that Lord Plinlimmon and Mr. Aylsbury, in consequence of Sir Egbert Eastville's death had arrived in London, until I saw them approach ; and I think the greatest culprit never experienced more confusion at standing before his judge, than I did from the dread of their recognizing me ; for not all the sophistry of cosmopolitism enabled me to despise men so superior in their moral excellence, while my reason assured me they must alike abhor and despise my professed laxity of principles. Yet they were now so near, that my only hope of escape, was to resume my seat. I did so quickly, and drawing down my hat, pulled out a letter, and bent over it as if engaged in the perusal. They walked by without noticing me, then stopped to observe the boys ; and as they faced the water their backs were turned towards where I sat, and I breathed more freely. But excitement sharpened my hearing, and I overheard some of their conversation. It appeared to be the continuation of the subject ; for Lord Plinlimmon, as if in answer to Mr. Aylsbury, somewhat vehemently said, "It may be so, but I persist in saying, the resemblance that boy bears to his mother endears him to me ; nay more,

when I gaze on his countenance—a type of her angelic expression—I feel it impossible to credit the tale of her guilt.”

There was much of austerity and coldness in Mr. Aylsbury’s manner, as he replied, “My Lord, I once thought as highly of Clara Arnheim as you possibly can; think you, then, that I would lightly admit the scandal attached to the name of one I looked upon as the very paragon, as the standard of feminine perfection—lovely, gentle, domestic, religious; graceful without affectation, and devout without enthusiasm? Think you, then, that anything short of the most convincing facts could persuade me that she committed that foul crime, so monstrous in its details, and all for the love of one utterly selfish and worthless; when I reflect upon it, I can scarcely mourn her terrible fate.”

With much emotion, Lord Plinlimmon answered, “Aylsbury, for a Christian minister, you speak harshly and most uncharitably; I would not our gentle Gertrude heard you. It would lessen, not only her love, but esteem. For once female friendship has proved sincere, and she who from infancy so well knew Clara, still clings to the belief of her innocence. But independent of individual affection, let me add, that it is a fearful lesson to parents to reflect, that a being so formed for virtue as Clara Arnheim, and educated by a

Pious father in the purest principles of morality and Christian faith, could be so misled. I tell you, Aylsbury, it lessons confidence in our own powers. On what foundation can we build our childrens' characters, if morals and religion are of no avail?"

Mr. Aylsbury answered mildly, "My Lord, I merit your rebuke; I spoke too vehemently, but remember, Sir Egbert was my most esteemed friend; think of his terrible fate. And then I feel more indignant against Clara's memory from her proving such an adept in deceit. I always suspected her attachment to Sir Freville Deerhurst, whose person and accomplishments were well calculated to excite love, while the intimacy afforded by their relationship gave full opportunity to increase her tenderness. Poor Arnheim also suspected their attachment, and when he elected me her guardian, more than once I sought her confidence, assuring her that, though I saw much to condemn in Freville, still, as I really imputed his errors to a neglected education and the intimacy of Lord Beletrieve, so fascinating to a vain and youthful mind, I thought that under her influence and example he might reform; and offered after a couple of years to get your Lordship to write to Sir Roger Deerhurst, to entreat that he would make some settlement, when I would gladly unite them."

"And Clara, how did she receive these offers?" demanded Lord Plinlimmon.

"Oh! there lay her folly, her deception, the foundation of her guilt; far from admitting her attachment, with unusual animation she declared that nothing could induce her to marry Freville, whom she had always viewed in the light of a brother; nay more, solemnly assured me that, as far from loving her, he had been long attached to some beautiful Irish girl—by the by, I fancy the same of whom we hear so much. And she also said, that Deerhurst only wished to marry her from a feeling of gratitude, and to save her from dependence: and then she enlarged on the folly of supposing Sir Roger would countenance their union, as imputing his son's misfortune to his marriage,—he hated all her family; and therein," continued Mr. Aylsbury, "in my opinion lay Clara's objection. Beneath her gentle exterior she must have been proud and ambitious; it is often so: there is no sounding the depths of the human heart."

"Still, to me," answered Lord Plinlimmon, "the whole appears strange. One thing, I admit, tells against her—the request she made at the time of her union with Sir Egbert, that even the existence of her cousin should be kept secret from him. Could she have kept up a secret correspondence with Deerhurst?"

"Impossible to say," rejoined Mr. Aylsbury; "but——" here his voice was lost in the noise made by the children, who, with the assistance of the soldier, were again floating the yacht, and they moved to the water's edge to look on; but soon resuming their walk, came still closer to where I sat, and I distinctly heard Mr. Aylsbury, in a voice more sad, say, "No, no, there was no doubt left of her intended elopement. I was at the time in Bath; but an acquaintance of mine, old Dick Collet, one of the best-hearted men in the world, and quite incapable of detraction or falsehood, assured me that he had not only met the chariot-and-four on its way, but conversed with a young Irish officer, the confidant of the principal, who, on learning of the death of Lady Eastville, betrayed the deepest emotion and penitence. Nay, so certain was Sir Freville Deerhurst of success, and by some neglect not having heard of the fatal scenes at the Terrace, he arrived on the appointed day, and had an interview with the Dowager Lady Eastville. Its result was, that she who before had at least doubted Clara's imprudence, was then convinced of her guilt."

So far I had listened with an attention so absorbing, that I paused not to calculate on the information that reached me; but now the beating of my heart, before violent, began to cease. I felt that I was fainting from excess of emotion; I

would hear more. By a violent struggle I roused the energies of life, and again Mr. Aylsbury's words were distinct to my understanding; yet it seemed as if his voice proceeded through some thick substance, which deadened it into an unnatural sound, and that it fell direct on my heart, not through the medium of hearing.

He said, "My Lord, none can now answer the question—it rests with the dead—but certainly, from the evening of Sir Freville Deerhurst's last visit to the Terrace, the malady of Sir Egbert assumed a more savage cast; still all his ferocity appeared concentrated against the little Hubert, formerly both his and Clara's favourite child. In other respects his bearing, though profoundly gloomy, was calm and inoffensive—so much so, that none but Mr. Waller, who had witnessed some proofs of his cruelty to the devoted child, suspected his terrible intention. Oh, God! what an innocent victim to be sacrificed on the altar of a mother's guilt!"

"It was, indeed, a terrible retribution; and whatever her faults, I rejoice that Clara died ere it was perpetrated."

As Lord Plinlimmon spoke these words they passed on.

All of the past seemed but as light events to the terrible knowledge that Clara and her son had died by violent means. Was this then the awful

explanation of the mystery I had so long suspected, and from which I had admitted the rapturous hope that Clara still lived? My sensations in the instant were so torturing, that I thought at the time, and long afterwards, they could not be exceeded by the sufferings of eternal retribution: happily the combination of circumstances and events which had led to such a consummation of suffering rarely occurs. The depression of my spirits was so great, that it embarrassed and confused my intellects; soon, and I began to doubt the reality, and imagine that I was misled by some fantasy. I looked around to re-assure myself: the park was deserted, and to my distracted vision it appeared as if the water was spreading till it extended to the horizon, and that it was laving my feet; and I dashed down my head to cool its burning throbs. In the attempt I rolled on the earth, and a sharp stone inflicted a deep wound on my forehead, just above the temple; half an inch lower, and death had saved me from the contemplation of a still greater crime.

I know not how long I remained prostrate; but when my perception returned, silence and darkness signed around. I arose, and in so doing I pressed my hand against the cut I had received, and which was painful. Either in consequence of recovery from the stupor, or perhaps owing to moving the lacerated skin, the blood rushed forth in a stream;

at first it helped to revive me, but, as I moved, it weakened me to such a degree, that, as with wobbly but tottering steps, I hurried on to Arlington Street, where I knew Colonel Mellish resided. I was obliged to grasp at the rails for support. Fortunately for me he was at home, and engaged in giving the last finish to his toilet, while a carriage waited to convey him to the Commander-in-chief's party; when, trembling, ghastly, and covered with blood, I reeled into his apartment, and grasping him by the arm, attempted to speak; but utterance was gone.

"Merciful heaven!" he exclaimed, "after all our precautions you have met and fought. I fear you are dreadfully wounded—and Lord Pinfathom—has he escaped? In the name of heaven, Sir Freville, tell me the worst; this suspense is terrible;" he spoke in broken sentences.

"Sir," interrupted his servant, "while you speak, the gentleman is bleeding to death; and look! your whole uniform is destroyed; you can never appear at the duke's to night—and all the world to be there!"

"Fly, fly, for a surgeon!" exclaimed Mellish in a tone of unaffected terror, his natural good nature impulsively returning, as seeing me in danger, he forgot his dislike and jealousy.

The servant disappeared, then kneeling by my side he attempted to bandage my wounds.

stop the effusion of blood; but tearing off the bandage, I called out in a deep hoarse voice, "Never,—never, till you acquaint me with the particulars of Clara's death. I know something terrible occurred, and that I was the cause. Even for a wretch like me, greater horrors cannot exist than my present suspense." With these words, overcome by exhaustion, I fell back insensible.

CHAPTER IX.

TEN days had passed away since I overheard Mr. Aylsbury's conversation in the Green Park; my wound was healed, my life pronounced out of danger; and Abernethy still retaining his partiality, strove by his skill and advice to recover me from a depression which was rendering life a burden too heavy to be borne. During that short period, the accumulated sorrows of the past and present had crowded on me: and, alas! there was then no future in my thoughts. Of Clara's end I had learned the following particulars—~~but~~ so tragical, that no friendship or sophistry could soften the details. It appeared, that at the very time I wrote my mad, infamous proposal, to induce Lady Eastville to elope with me, her friends, and Sir Egbert's, were using every earnest and well-concerted means to bring about a reconciliation between them. Dr. Jerold was again in attendance on her little girl, who had been re-

Moved to the hunting-lodge, and of whose recovery no hopes remained. This naturally softened Sir Egbert; and the Rev. Mr. Coalston and the Dowager Lady Eastville unceasingly endeavoured to persuade him of the innocence of his lady, which they then devoutly believed; and of the progress of their interposition, constant accounts were sent to Clara, who, on her part, wrote to Lady Aylsbury then in England, requesting she would come to the Terrace and disprove the vile calumny of Nelly Dudgeon, to the effect, that she (Lady Eastville) had visited Mrs. Jane Onslow for the purpose of meeting Freville Deerhurst, who, at the period, was not in Chatham. She also begged that Mr. Aylsbury might accompany her, as she much needed his advice and support.

At length, yielding to the entreaties of his friends, Sir Egbert consented to listen patiently to his lady's explanation of her conduct, and casting passion aside, to judge her according to the dictates of his calmer reason. It was arranged that their first interview should be private, and those who were most interested expected it would prove decisive, and that their re-union would be the result, and hoped to see them enjoy former happiness. In all but the last opinion, Clara coincided. "The storm has passed away," she said, "but the desolation it has wrought will leave ineffaceable marks. Yet in this I bow submission to the

will of God: my trial has proved that neither wealth, nor station, nor friendship, nor love, can be depended upon; all of earth necessarily partakes of corruption. If I know my own heart, henceforth religion shall be my only staff." By such reasoning did the unfortunate Clara ever strive to draw good out of the evils that encompassed her.

There are some coincidences apparently so strange, and though trifling in themselves lead to such results, that one can scarcely avoid connecting them with a superstitious belief in the agency of evil spirits. The 3rd of December, 1812, was the day fixed for Clara's interview with Sir Egbert, and on the previous one each had exhibited signs of violent excitement. Sir Egbert, carrying himself according to his high and stately bearing, affected to appear cold, stern, and indifferent to the result, but there was something startling in the expression of his eyes and his closely compressed lips: the internal struggle between love and jealousy, pride and tenderness, could neither be conquered nor disguised. On the other hand, the flushed and trembling Clara had never appeared more gentle or interesting. Expecting to return to the Lodge with Sir Egbert, she had arranged all things for her departure, selecting whatever she thought might conduce to her little daughter's happiness and comfort; and with all the sanguineness of a

fond mother, fancying that under her care she would yet recover. Towards evening, however, she became nervous and depressed, entreating Mrs. Waller not to leave her, and when she fell to sleep, her slumbers were so restless that several times she got up to pray, and so passed the night. The morning of the 3rd rose gloomy, but the air was dry; and to cheer her spirits and pass the anxious hours till one—the time Sir Egbert had appointed—she walked through her conservatories and flower-gardens, issuing orders about the plants. Afterwards she dressed with unusual care; and as she expected Lady Aylsbury's answer, and encouraged a hope that it would announce Mr. Aylsbury's intention of joining her at the Terrace, knowing his intimate friendship with Sir Egbert, and her own high esteem for his character, which she thought reciprocal, she expected much good from his presence; so, in her impatience, instead of waiting for the General Post boy, she sent off a footman to F—— for her letters.

It wanted some moments of twelve when the footman returned with my infamous missive, which Mellish had so dexterously sent in the place of Lady Aylsbury's, and almost at the same instant Dr. Jerold arrived; his regard and anxiety for Lady Eastville inciting him to be near, in the event of the interview proving too much for her

strength, while, from the haughty, suspicious manner in which Sir Egbert had latterly treated him, he feared lest his being seen might rather injure than serve the cause in which he was so interested. On reaching the hall, he saw Mr. Waller, who was going up stairs with the letter.

"Shall I announce you, Doctor?" she inquired.

"By no means," he answered; "but haster back—I would speak to you."

She promised, and in a few moments returned; the next moment they saw Sir Egbert and Mr. Coalston cantering up the front avenue.

"Shall I run and acquaint my lady?" said Mrs. Waller.

"No," replied Jerold, in a jocosse tone, "you must hide me first; show me to the housekeeper's room."

Sir Egbert now entered. He was much flushed; and as, with his usual stately politeness, he showed Mr. Coalston into the dining-room, and rang for refreshments, his manner was unusually haughty and imperative. He then descended the stairs, but must have been greatly agitated, for he clung to the balusters for support. Ere he reached the top, Jerold, whose spirits were in an ecstasy at the anticipated reconciliation, joined Mr. Coalston in the dining-room, and, indulging in his gay humour, desired him fill his glass and drink long life and

renewed happiness to Sir Egbert and his lady. Mr. Coalston, almost equally pleased, readily pledged him. Far different was the scene which took place in Lady Eastville's boudoir.

On inquiry afterwards, it appeared that, when Mrs. Waller handed Lady Eastville my letter, she was sitting near the fire-place, which was situated in a corner of the room. On receiving it, she rose, and, as the December morning was very dark, advanced some paces towards the window, to peruse it. Astonished at its contents,—at first doubting the possibility of my audacious folly,—she supposed there must be some mistake; but when convinced, her indignation was unbounded. As she turned towards the bell to summon Waller, and acquaint her of my presumption, she beheld Sir Egbert, whom she had not expected for another hour, standing at the door, and intently watching her. There was an expression in his eyes which struck on her heart—they seemed to possess the fabled power of the basilisk. The awful tale of his mother's madness rushed into her memory. Taken by surprise—inexperienced as a child in the arts of intrigue or deception—she possessed no presence of mind, but thought “Should he read this wicked, senseless letter, he will discard me for ever;” and while her every limb trembled with terror, crushing the hateful paper, she sprang towards the fire, to burn it; but

he was too quick. Snatching it from her, he deliberately read it through, while she, pale, and almost lifeless as a statue, unable to speak or defend herself, still hoping to deprecate his anger, knelt with clasped hands before him. But his jealousy, at this proof of her supposed guilt, rose to frenzy. At first, he spurned her with his foot, and then, as she attempted to rise, raised her in his arms, and, uttering a savage yell, dashed her to the ground, then, rushing down the stairs, mounted his horse, and, with a maniac's speed, fled from the Terrace.

The heavy fall, the wild yell, were heard—a moment, and Dr. Jerold, Mr. Coalston, and Mrs. Waller knelt by the side of the hapless Clara. To their anxious inquiries she motioned to her back; Jerold gently examined it. The spine was greatly injured—she had but a few hours to live. The kind Doctor's grief could not be controlled; it betrayed the awful truth. But why linger over the sad scene that followed? Enough: on morning, Clara died a Christian death, forgiving, as she hoped to be forgiven; solemnly protesting her innocence, and exonerating Sir Egbert from all blame. And oh! greater forbearance still, addressing Dr. Jerold, she said, "Bear to my cousin, Freville, this fatal letter, and my forgiveness; and tell him, if the prayers of the dying can avail, I offer up mine, that he may yet

repent, and turn back to his God. This to him will be a voice from the dead."

* * * * *

The coroner's inquest returned a verdict, "Died in consequence of an accidental fall, which caused premature confinement." And in the darkness of night, Clara, the beloved of many, was buried in a solitary corner at the cemetery on the east side of St. Mary's Church, in the small town of F—— for even death had not allayed the savage jealousy of Sir Egbert, and he sternly refused to permit her sad remains to rest in the family vault.

For some days after this act of violence, Sir Egbert appeared perfectly calm, though gloomy to despondency, except once or twice that he had demanded my letter from Mrs. Waller; who, not wishing further to irritate him or implicate Dr. Jerold's name, denied all knowledge of it. At these times he betrayed such anger and hatred as convinced her his reason was disturbed. In the mean time the neighbourhood were undecided, and knew not whether to believe or to discredit Clara's guilt. The fearful catastrophe of her death had awakened commiseration, and the opinions of Dr. Jerold and Mrs. Coulston were in her favour; but from the period when the chariot to carry her off had been seen, many voices had been raised against her; indeed to any rational mind it seemed

impossible that I could have proceeded to such lengths without her absolute consent. Unfortunately, Dr. Jerold had given me back my letter, which would have explained the circumstances, and also as his profound grief betrayed the deep interest he had taken in her, and as it is man's evil nature ever to entertain the most uncharitable suspicions, a new obloquy was cast on Clara's memory, and they accused Jerold of being privy to the whole, and asserted that Mrs. Waller had been her confidant. Shocked at the whole business, disgusted with the neighbourhood, and being perfectly independent in his circumstances, he removed to London on the death of Sir Egbert's little girl; and about the same time Mr. Coalston, who was presented to a living in the diocese of Worcester, also left F——; thus except the humble Mrs. Waller, the only friends of Lady Eastville who knew and upheld her innocence, quitted the vicinity of the Terrace; where, as before, the faithful housekeeper remained to superintend the establishment. And there the little Herbert, to whom Sir Egbert now indicated the greatest aversion, also continued. No change was made in the other servants; indeed the unfortunate Sir Egbert seemed incapable of all minor considerations; still his hatred to everything connected with Clara, constantly betrayed itself; her emotions were torn from the roots, or the vases dashed to

the ground ; her flower-knots trampled, or at his command dug up ; yet, except Mrs. Waller, none suspected the fearful cause of this destruction ; and she soon began to entertain the greatest apprehensions for the safety of Herbert ; yet so unhappy was her position, that except by constant watching she knew no means to guard the devoted child.

What first awakened her fears, was her observing that when Sir Egbert rode over to the Terrace with his eldest son, in whom he seemed to have concentrated all his love and tenderness, if he saw the brothers at play he became furious, ordering the little wretch,—so he termed Herbert,—to be banished ; still it was difficult to keep the children, delighted with each other, separate ; discovering which he no longer brought Egbert with him, though his own visits became more frequent ; and if his manner to Herbert was less violent, still he occasionally eyed him askance in a manner that increased Mrs. Waller's alarm. In this extremity she resolved to consult the curate,—a young man who had succeeded Mr. Coalston. He listened patiently, but imputed her fears to nervousness ; remarking that he frequently met Sir Egbert ; that he had conversed with him ; and that, though very melancholy, no person could appear more calm or rational. This by no means removed her fears, though it proved that she must

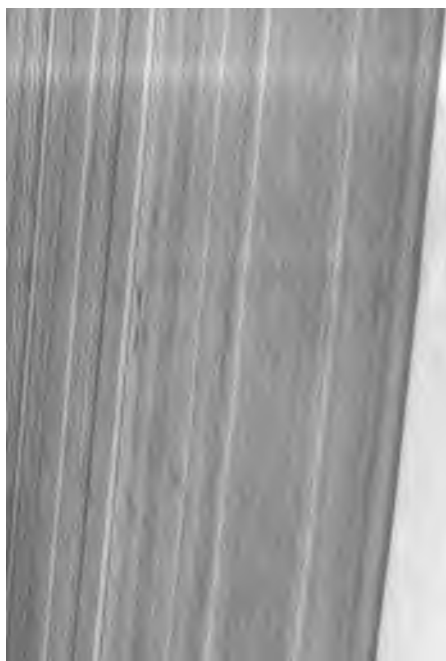
solely depend on herself to ward off the apprehended danger; consequently, she never—not even for a moment—permitted the boy out of her sight, taking him to sleep in her own bed. About a fortnight after her application to the Countess she received a convincing proof of Sir Egbert's intention.

One of the few valuables which my father's poverty enabled him to preserve was a bamboo sword-cane; it was headed with gold, and the crest and initials of Sir Roger (who had sent it to him from India,) were embossed on it with very valuable brilliants. On my father's death, Mr. Tennant had in my name taken possession of it; and he afterwards gave it to me in London; subsequently with other of my luggage, it was forwarded to the Terrace; and as it attracted Herbert's notice, I permitted him to hold it by the string and ride with it. To prevent accidents I had firmly glued down the top so as to prevent the possibility of his pulling out the sword.

It chanced that, on the very day of Clara's fall, the poor child, in high glee, was riding this cane, which, in my confusion, I had left after me, across the hall at the very moment Sir Egbert rushed down the stairs. He fiercely kicked him out of his way. The poor little fellow screamed loudly, but the awful scene above absorbed all attention. However, from that period he seemed greatly

afraid of his father ; and when he saw him approach, ran and hid himself in some remote corner.

To return to Mrs. Waller. About a fortnight after she had sought the advice of the Curate she had lent this cane to Herbert, and not expecting Sir Egbert, permitted him to ride on it up and down the Terrace walk, and he occasionally ran into the apartment I had occupied, when Sir Egbert arrived unexpectedly. Mrs. Waller was engaged at the time below stairs, but hearing her master's voice hastened up, and as he ascended heard the door of the apartment I had occupied locked, and then a shriek from the child. With wonderful presence of mind she rushed out of the hall-door, and entering by the window that reached to the ground saw Herbert crouching in a corner, like a hare on its form, behind a sofa, while Sir Egbert stood before him, glaring like a tiger on its prey, with the cane in his hand, fiercely engaged in striving to pull out the sword. Fortunately I had fastened it so firmly, that it long resisted his utmost strength. At length it yielded ; and as he waved it round his head, the polished triple-edged weapon glittered brightly. A shriek of agony burst from the terrified and doomed child ; another, and his voice had been silenced for ever ; but Mrs. Waller had crept softly behind Sir Egbert, and steady in her purpose, collecting her strength, she



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was requested, but while undecided how to act, a footman arrived from the hunting-lodge bringing a note from Sir Egbert, inviting the Curate to dinner at the Terrace on the following day, and requesting that he would bring one or two of his friends, as he wished their opinion on a very distressing subject. He concluded by saying, "I am aware my expecting this favour from gentlemen with whom I have so slight an acquaintance must at least appear presumptuous, but occasionally circumstances will arise so imperative as to oblige us to wave the etiquettes of society, and this must plead my excuse for the liberty I now take."

The writing, and the whole style of this note were perfectly in keeping with Sir Egbert's studied manner, and spite of Mrs. Waller's entreaties for permission to leave Herbert in one of their houses, where Sir Egbert would not suspect him to be, they one and all positively refused, at least until after the dinner at the Terrace, when they assured her if they saw any cause to sanction her terrors, they would carefully guard the child. Obligated to yield, though not convinced, she returned with her beloved charge, resolved to seek some other means of protection for him against the impending danger.

On the following morning she received a note from Sir Egbert, stating that he expected company

to dinner, and accordingly that she must have everything prepared for a party of six, and that before seven he would arrive at the Terrace to entertain them. Nothing could be more rational than the style of these directions; but this circumstance only increased her embarrassment. That he purposed murdering Herbert she was convinced, for she had witnessed one attempt. Could revenge have wrought up his mind to such a determination? To prove his insanity had been her only hope, so flinging herself on her knees, she called on God to assist her in saving the child, the beloved of Clara, her darling, and recommended to her care at the solemn hour of death.

At the appointed hour Sir Egbert arrived. This time he was not on horseback, but came in his chariot: he was dressed with peculiar care; he had grown very thin, and there was a contraction on his brow, and a hectic on his cheeks, so that his appearance was greatly altered; but his studied politeness, his stately carriage, were the same as ever. One difference only was observable; he spoke almost under his breath, and when he addressed any person he cast his eyes to the ground, as if apprehensive that their expression might betray his inward struggles.

The curate, Dr. Jerold's successor, and two other gentlemen arrived, and were received with

courtesy, and the dinner passed off—if I may be allowed the expression—naturally. The dessert being laid, and the attendants withdrawn, Sir Egbert, in a very low calm voice, addressed the company. As he did so his face flushed, and a slight thick foam every now and then collected round his mouth, which he carefully wiped off, saying, “Gentlemen, the subject upon which I would speak to you is so exciting, that I can scarcely retain my composure: may I hope that any agitation I betray will not be imputed to the cause Mrs. Waller is so anxious to impress upon you and the neighbourhood?”

He paused, and they all assured him that the opinion of such a woman could influence no person against him.

He expressed his thanks, and then in touching accents continued, “Gentlemen, you have all heard of my misfortune—my disgrace—but I could not retain my reason and talk over it—*then* indeed Mrs. Waller might triumph. What I would say, gentlemen, is this; that though the boy Herbert is not my child, still the law fixes him on me, and at my death, by marriage settlement, he will inherit much of my property. It is a sad truth, gentlemen, a terrible grievance, to have one’s own son robbed of inherited wealth, to be heaped on the child of one’s enemies; the greatest, the cruellest of enemies; a false wife, a

base, triumphant seducer. Good God! and must I submit to this?" He clasped his hands—he gnashed his teeth—and a fearful cry escaped. He was aware of the impression his fury might leave, so, strange to say, conquering his agony, he said, "Gentlemen, excuse my emotion; if it is violent, the cause was sufficient; excuse, and do not report my weakness." He raised his handkerchief to his face with his left hand, reaching out his right to the company. Each pressed it with a feeling of reverence and such profound pity, that many tears were shed.

For a quarter of an hour silence was observed; then Sir Egbert withdrew his handkerchief. His face was almost livid, with spots of bright red; but his manner was more collected and calm even than before, as again speaking he said; "Gentlemen, the immediate object of my troubling you—for at present from the state of my mind I am unfitted for company—was to dismiss from my household Mrs. Waller. I feel that this measure may appear harsh, since for years she was to my late" (he paused, but immediately resumed) "to my late wife, governess, housekeeper, and confidant; and, presuming on this, she now interferes between me and the boy Herbert, all the while aware that he is not mine; and solicitous to have the sole care of him, for which she knows she would be amply paid, she has accused me of

cruelty, circulating the most awful reports; in short, she would persuade the world that I am insane."

Here Sir Egbert laughed at the idea, and proceeded; "I fancy, gentlemen, it requires no effort on my part to refute this calumny; but as the woman makes herself troublesome, I have engaged another to supply her place; one who on a former occasion proved trustworthy." He paused and his face was strongly convulsed; perhaps he was conscious of this, for he again pressed his handkerchief against it; but after awhile removing it, in a deep solemn tone he continued; "Although the measure may appear unusual, it is my fixed resolve to dismiss this woman in your presence;" with these words he rose and rang the bell with violence, and on the entrance of a footman, peremptorily commanded that in the course of half an hour Mrs. Waller should attend in the dining-room to receive her dismissal.

Though this address appeared extraordinary, none of the party could presume to interfere; and Sir Egbert, resuming his seat, appeared quite calm, and conversed with such ease and freedom, that had any doubts of his sanity existed they would have been removed: but on Mrs. Waller's appearance, he again betrayed much emotion. Mastering it, he addressed her with tolerable composure; observing, that, being fully acquainted with the

reports she had circulated to his disadvantage, to the effect that she had represented him as cruel and violent, he discharged her from his household. She must quit his service. He said that he had already made preparations, and that very night had engaged another person to attend on the boy Herbert. "However," he continued, "as I do not wish to act unkindly to a person who has so long resided in my family, I present you with this," and he dashed a heavy purse at her feet, at the same time casting a glance of such concentrated hatred and triumph as confirmed her belief of his dark purpose.

She looked entreatingly towards the company, but they turned coldly away, and began to converse on general topics. This convinced her she had no assistance to expect; struggling to suppress her grief, though pale and trembling, she submissively entreated Sir Egbert's permission to remain that evening. He consented, but sullenly, in a fierce voice exclaiming, "Think not to deceive me. I shall return here to-morrow, and if you are not gone, you must abide the consequences." She retired, and her worst fears were verified, on finding that Nelly Dudgeon was the person appointed to supply her place.

Soon after, Sir Egbert and his party rode off, but early on the following morning he returned to inquire whether she was gone. Hearing she had

orted for York by the mail, he expressed much
faction, and remarking that he should not for
e time again reside at the Terrace, he dis-
ged several of his dependents, including
ter the Butler, the footman, &c.; in short, all
the under servants.

CHAPTER X.

FOR some weeks after this, Sir Egbert shut himself up in his hunting-lodge, refusing to receive visitors, and never going out except by night, when, however severe the weather, he wandered forth for hours. Still it was no person's business, and no notice was taken beyond a remark or a laugh at the haughty baronet being so humbled. During his seclusion he was constantly engaged examining deeds and papers, and he wrote a long explanatory letter to his lawyer, to inquire whether, in the event of his satisfactorily proving that the boy Herbert was not his child, but that of Sir Freville Deerhurst, he could disinherit him from the vast sum settled on the younger children of the Eastville family, and which nearly equalled the estates of the elder son. The lawyer returned a very decisive answer, showing that as he (Sir Egbert) had been living with his lady on the happiest terms both before and after Herbert's birth, the child was legally his; the law required

no more. The lawyer added, that it would be very unfortunate if it did; certainly would cause a great change of property.

This unequivocal reply affected Sir Egbert deeply. He was constantly heard to utter wild yells, and people began to think that Mrs. Waller was right in her belief of his insanity; and the curate wrote off, to acquaint Mr. Aylsbury and Mr. Coalston, both of whom he knew were his friends; but unhappily, these efforts proved too late, for from the period that he found he could not disinherit Herbert, the wretched man must have fixed on his fell purpose of destroying the boy. By what means he perpetrated the deed could not be traced; however, the following particulars were proved:—Although so great a wretch, Nelly Dudgeon, when acquainted by Mrs. Waller of Sir Egbert's attempt to murder Herbert, was greatly shocked. Till then her vulgar mind never conceived the terrible passions to which her vindictive lies had given birth; and she swore to protect the child as if he were her own; and to induce her to render him more attention, Mrs. Waller presented her with a large bribe, and also by the same means obtained similar promises from the other servants, and for some weeks they were all very observant; but as, in the mean time, Sir Egbert had never called at the Terrace, they began to think Mrs. Waller must have been mistaken;

at all events, as there was no appearance of danger, they grew careless on their watch.

It was March, and a few days after the curate had written to Mr. Aylsbury and Mr. Coalston the equinoctial winds had set in fiercely, and this night they rose to a fearful storm, and as they swept over the grounds of the Terrace, several of the finest trees were uprooted, while the troubled waters of the lake scattered them with foam around. Greatly terrified, Nelly Dudgeon, first putting Herbert to sleep in the apartment I had occupied, and which she considered more sheltered than his nursery, which was situated up stairs, descended to the servants' hall, and with the other domestics supported her spirits by indulging in a carouse, till the whole party became intoxicated. It afterwards appeared that about midnight they heard a great crash, accompanied by shrieks; all started up, but it had died away; so imputing it to the roaring of the wind, and probably to the bursting in of some of the windows, and not being very collected or steady, they resumed their seats, and made no inquiry till the following morning, when, recovered from the effects of their intoxication, they found that the window, or casement of the apartment opening on the Terrace walk, and in which they had placed Herbert, was broken. It appeared that the hinges and lock had resisted force, but some panes

glass had been shattered to atoms, and an aperture made sufficiently large to admit of a person's entering, and the poor child was gone. A struggle must have ensued, for part of his torn night-dress was on the floor, stained with blood, and several ringlets of his dark glossy hair, of which Clara had been so proud, were scattered about. Instantly, and the report spread through the neighbourhood—all were in alarm. Shocked, ashamed of their former inertness, the Curate and the other gentlemen scoured the whole neighbourhood for information; at length, floating on the lake, was seen Herbert's night-cap and the remnant of his dress, while Sir Egbert was found cowering half naked, under the shelter of the woods. The awful deed had raised his madness to the highest degree—he was awfully wild. Keepers were placed on him, and the waters dragged for Herbert's body, which was not found. On the very next day Mr. Aylsbury arrived; it is needless to say how grieved he was at the awful intelligence. Sir Egbert had ever been his most valued friend, and his state no longer admitted of doubt or alleviation. Mr. Coalston also came that evening, and expressed severe displeasure that no means had been adopted to prevent Mrs. Waller's instigation. In short, the whole town of F—— were in a state of excitement, and crowds flocked round the lake where Herbert had perished, bitter execrations against the guilty

mother who had caused such desolation, was intermingled with the tears of pity for the innocent boy, and as fully afflicted father. A few days, and Mr. Aylsbury accompanied Sir Egbert, still under the custody of keepers, to London, where he placed him under the care of Dr. Wilson, who at once declared his case to be hopeless. At the house of that worthy physician he received every attention and consolation his wretched state admitted. After a period his paroxysm of violence ceased, but his gloomy despondency was far more miserable to himself; in this way he continued till relieved by death, an event which took place on the 10th of September, 1814, at the very time I was gaily dashing about London with the beautiful Aigline, and actually glorying in my vices; but there is a power above who never slumbers, and whose retributive justice sooner or later overtakes the sinner; and even while my crushed heart seemed to wither at hearing of the awful scenes which my wretched crimes had caused, other sorrows awaited me. I must be brief in this recital.

From the quantity of blood I had lost, and the fever kept up by excitement, I was so weakened, that Abernethy apprehended decline; while from the total breaking up of my nervous system, I suffered a depression of mind far more grievous. Not a fortnight had passed since I rushed into

Mellish's lodging, yet within that short period, my person had grown quite attenuated, and all appetite was gone; still I appeared perfectly resigned. Mellish, surprised, and no doubt provoked, at a composure which he imputed to a practical selfishness, which nothing not solely personal could affect, and consequently, being less delicate of wounding my feelings, acquainted me that La Franck had always disapproved of my being kept in ignorance of the facts relative to Lady Eastville's death. It was his opinion, that the knowledge might guard me against future dissipation, and probably lead to sincere repentance: "but," added Mellish, "I who had never seen one of the victims, suffered so much from having been an actor in the affair, that with my free will, Sir Freville, you should never have heard of it. However, I am happy to find you bear up so well." Whenever he spoke thus, I forced a smile, but offered no reply.

On the first day I was equal to leave my apartment. I had obtained a sleeping-room in the house where Mellish lodged. I sent Llewellyn to inquire after Aigline, and to request her presence. In my exhausted state, remembering our last interview, I entertained some dread of our meeting; but, on the other hand, from the generosity of her nature, I was aware that the moment she saw me ill and afflicted, all anger would be forgotten,

and I clung to this my last hope with a tenacity which rendered me quite impatient. Llewellyn soon returned, bringing the intelligence that Aiglina had fled from the house. Observing my vexation he hesitated to give me the particulars, so I was obliged to use my authority, threatening to dismiss him from my service if he suppressed the least circumstance, and remarking, that I had reason to believe she purposed eloping with Captain Mac Duff Gower.

Concluding from this that I knew the worst, he told me that she certainly had eloped, but not with Captain Mac Duff Gower. It appeared that her attendant had found her lying in the hall very ill, and had instantly sent off for a physician: that soon after, a strange gentleman called, and spoke privately with her. After which, though weeping bitterly, and so weak that she was obliged to be supported, she had gone off with him in a hired coach which he had ordered to be sent for. the attendant accompanying them also; that early on the following day, the attendant had returned for some linen and dresses, and then carefully sealed up the keys, leaving them directed for me; since which time neither she nor her mistress had been heard of. As Llewellyn repeated this intelligence, he looked very wise, and seemed to think it most mysterious; but I concluded that Mac Duff considered it more prudent to appoint a

proxy to bear off Aigline, by which means he had a better chance of keeping his secret, and of escaping a challenge from me, which, doubtless, from his dread of having the affair made public and reaching his lady's knowledge, he was solicitous to avoid. This conclusion appeared satisfactory, and I strove to reconcile myself to my separation from Aigline, by reflecting on her inconstancy, which almost excited abhorrence. But it was not so easy to part—and for ever—from one whose beauty, accomplishments, and enthusiasm had shed such a charm over my existence; independent of which, being accustomed to her society, I had to contend against the force of habit and want of the excitement which even her caprices had helped to keep alive. My heart shuddered as it contemplated its own desolation.

Deeply impressed by the manly kindness of Mellish—grateful for the secrecy he had observed on the subject of the Eastvilles, and which not even the angry jealousy awakened by my intimacy with Aigline, or my cold contemptuous manner, had led him to betray—I resolved for once to follow his example, and not communicate this fresh proof of Aigline's depravity; for, harsh as the word sounds, I felt her conduct was nothing short of it; but circumstances betrayed it to him.

It chanced that early in October the Duke of

York held a great military levee. It was on some particular occasion which I cannot now remember. Mellish was expected to attend, and had to get a new full-dress uniform; for the one he before had I had quite destroyed. He thought to keep this a secret from me, but his servant revealed it. However, I took no notice; for I was aware that though in the softness of his benevolent nature he could not see me suffer and not sympathize, still that with his esteem I had lost his friendship, and that no distress could tempt him to accept of a pecuniary obligation; though having no money but his pay, and being constitutionally extravagant, he was often put to it to keep up an appearance equal to his rank. But I had arranged a plan in my own mind to render him independent; and the hope of doing so was the solitary pleasure I derived from my wealth.

Three hours might have elapsed from the period Mellish quitted me to attend the levee; and I spent the interval reclining on a sofa in a small drawing-room which we had in common. The lassitude of my body extended to my mind, and I lay in a state of apathy which for the time being suspended even the tortures of memory, when I was roused by the entrance of Mellish. As I turned languidly round to address him, I was struck by his air of profound melancholy. Rising up from the sofa, I said, "Are you ill, Mellish,

or is it merely fatigue from the crowd? Really, you look quite miserable."

He answered, "Neither. But, Sir Freville, I am both surprised and agitated."

"Ha!" I exclaimed, "Is it possible anything can have occurred at the levee to annoy you? Surely your character as an officer and a gentleman cannot be impeached."

"No, no," he replied hastily; "but just as I was waiting for my carriage to return home, Captain Mac Duff Gower, of the —, and whom I had known in the Peninsula, accosted me, and after some conversation said, 'Colonel Mellish, can you give me any information of Sir Freville Deerhurst? It is reported that he is at your lodgings in Arlington Street, and incog.'

"I replied coldly, 'Sir Freville at present is staying with me, but certainly not incog.: for what reason should he? it is not probable that he need hide from his creditors.'"

'No one suspects him of that, or of cowardice either,' he answered; 'but still there is some mystery connected with his absence. First; why should he retire from his princely residence to crowd your apartments? next, the beautiful Aig-line has disappeared, and no trace can be discovered. Colonel Mellish, I much fear, that rendered desperate by her brother's return to England, and Sir Freville's desertion, and being torn by remorse,

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disappointment soured her temper, and they lived unhappily. No, Aigline was full of levity; but she was sincere to a fault, and I have no doubt but that this story was fabricated to disguise a horrible truth; and, as the nephew of her deceased husband, I am called upon by justice as well as feeling, to inquire into facts; and, by heaven! I will sift this business to its source.'

" 'May she not,' I suggested, 'have fled to her brother? You say she knew of his being in London. When circumstances prevented Sir Freville returning to her, perhaps imputing the neglect to indifference, her high spirit rose, and being resolved on quitting her degraded life, who so likely to protect her as a brother she tenderly loved? and perhaps in her wish to see him, she conquered the dread—the embarrassment of their first meeting. Oh! Captain Mac Duff, say it was so—it cannot be, that Aigline perished by her own free will.' I could not proceed from agitation.

" He kindly took me by the hand observing, 'would to heaven I could console you by the hope; but when first I heard of her disappearance your fear occurred to myself, and I immediately called upon Captain Tennant, who, in respect of my relationship, received me, though denied to all others. Never have I met a nobler-minded man, or one of more refined ideas; it is quite

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and I shrank back involuntarily, while Mellish hastily rising, stepped forward, and with forced cheerfulness exclaimed, "Dear George, after so many years, and all your adventures on the wild seas, welcome back to merry England. It is with pleasure I greet you."

"Pleasure!" repeated Tennant, in a cold sad tone, as he gazed on poor Mellish, whose flushed cheeks bore the traces of tears, while his parched lips quivered as they uttered their welcome. There was a silence, during which I observed Tennant. He had been a fine youth, but his present appearance even exceeded its promise; and as he stood opposite to Mellish, with his arms folded, and in the full dress of a naval officer, I thought I had never seen a form on which nobility—the nobility of a superior mind—was so impressed. He was upwards of six feet one, and of large though perfect proportions; his hair and eyes were as dark as Aigline's, and the contour of his face handsome; still he by no means possessed her beauty, and their expression was quite different, her's being brilliant and variable, his calm to gravity. In his bearing and address, like his father, he was a perfect gentleman, but he possessed more dignity, and perhaps less grace. Probably the difference resulted from their respective professions; however, such as George Tennant was, the highest aristocrat in England might

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loved, and of whom I was so proud. Next to her came the thought of renewing the intimacy of you, Mellish, Sir Freville Deerhurst, and La Franck—my most esteemed companions. And what have I found? Aigline ——! but no, no, no! I cannot call her what she is. Nay, in such a case as mine, words are useless. Mellish, hear me. Mac Duff Gower has referred me to you for some particulars relative to my wretched sister, which he hesitated to communicate. Also, yielding to my representations, he has given up his intention of challenging Sir Freville Deerhurst; and my business here is, that you shall bear him a message from me. Mac Duff offered to act as my second, proposing you for Sir Freville Deerhurst's. But it is my fixed resolve to implicate no one in my just quarrel; for ere we quit the field, either Sir Freville or I—perhaps both—shall be called to our last account. Then let God judge between us." As he spoke these words, his whole person assumed an air of fixed determination, such as might have animated it when amidst contending elements and man's destructive engines, he calmly issued forth these orders upon which ensued the conquest of Anhalt.

While he addressed Mellish, the latter, whose good nature often bordered on weakness, leading him to pity the persecuted, even when convinced of their guilt, observed a profound silence, and

studiously avoided looking in the direction where I sat. But to continue any longer listening to such language would have been dishonourable, and might have been mistaken for cowardice. Striving to summon up courage for a meeting so embarrassing, I slowly advanced to where they stood, with their backs towards the window. Mellish's quick eye observed my movement. Concluding I wished to glide from the apartment, he strove to engross Tennant's attention. At the same instant I gave a start,—for a large mirror reflected back my emaciated figure, over which my clothes loosely hung. As to my face, it was perfectly ghastly, rendered more so to appearance by a black patch over my left temple; and my hair, whose growth was very rapid, fell in profusion over my neck. Altogether my appearance was as squalid as if I had escaped from a lunatic asylum. George Tennant turned round and eyed me with astonishment; but for some time without recognition. This increased my confusion,—the blood rushed to my face, and I suppose made me look something more like my former self; for in a deep emphatic tone he said, “Good heaven! can this be Freville Deerhurst?”

“He has been ill,” replied Mellish, speaking very rapidly; “first, he met with an accident by which he lost a quantity of blood, since when he has experienced great mental suffering; so, my

dear Tennant, let me entreat you, until he is recovered to avoid all dispute—a duel in his state is out of the question.”

He replied haughtily, “Colonel Mellish, my business with Sir Freville Deerhurst is not to inquire into the state of his health or suffering, in neither of which do I take the least interest; but in the first place to call him to account for his conduct towards my sister, in the second, to demand where she now is; and should he hesitate to acquaint me, to oblige him to the explanation.”

His manner provoked me, who, for the last two years had been accustomed to the deference paid to wealth and military distinction. Resolved to be equally haughty, I retorted, “In what way, Captain Tennant, can you oblige me to speak of your sister, if I choose to avoid the subject? As to giving you satisfaction, that, of course, you can command; name your time and place; there need be no bullying on the subject, methinks none can doubt my courage.”

He answered in the same calm tone, but there was more of scorn in it, “You talk boldly of bullying, Sir Freville; but as a gentleman, who never understood its practice, I disdain to reply. As to your boasted courage, it is one of our animal propensities, when provoked by the passion of hatred or anger, to fly fiercely at our antagonist; how much a taste for cruelty and blood

influences the act is not our present consideration; but I aver that there can be no moral courage or principle in the man who acted the part you have by my unfortunate sister. However, this is not a subject for cavilling. In the presence of Colonel Mellish, I demand of you where she now is; should you refuse to satisfy me on that point, I shall have recourse to legal measures; her shame, the shame of a disgraced woman, cannot be more public than your accursed vanity has rendered it. Sneer, you may sneer, Sir Freville Deerhurst, I do not disguise that you have humbled me—ay, far more than defeat in battle, or the most abject poverty could have done. Well may you triumph, for you have reversed all my hardly-gained honours, and no future prosperity can erase from my memory the stigma of a sister's infamy. By heavens! I feel abashed before all upright men, and blush to meet an acquaintance or friend." His composure was gone, and he strode rapidly up and down the apartment.

"Mellish," I whispered, "I am not the heartless wretch circumstances make me appear; how, for a moment, could Tennant suppose that I sneered at a sorrow I so deeply commiserate? Far from it; I cannot bring myself to explain what must add to his confusion, that Aigline has fled with another, and that I am positive Captain Mac Duff Gower is the man."

He answered in a low voice, but with a violence and bitterness which proved that he had again yielded to the resentment of jealousy. "Pshaw, a woman so heartless, so inconstant, so depraved, deserves no pity; it were a weakness to disguise or extenuate her conduct. Far from shielding it, with my good-will I would denounce her to the whole world, and delight in seeing her driven forth an outcast, bearing the brand of shame on her forehead, if, indeed, one so abandoned could feel shame. You look doubtfully, Sir Freville; even in thought you dare not insult me so far as to suppose I could love or pity one so lost to every better feeling. No, I blush to think she was ever dear to me; but I have so completely conquered the sentiment, that at present I positively hate her; and, methinks, if I saw her perishing from want, I would not stretch forth a hand to save her."

Continuing my under-tone, I rejoined, "but this is not our subject; advise me how to act; if I refuse to acquaint Tennant of her elopement, he will certainly apply to counsel; on what plea he can ground his complaint, how far legal measures can interfere, I know not. What I dislike is a further exposure of the business. You are aware that even in boyhood George never yielded a point against his convictions, so there is no hope of dissuading him; and to confess a truth, disgusted with

Captain Mac Duff's hypocrisy and the contemptuous manner in which he ever treated me, I should find pleasure in exposing him, but for Aigline, who, whatever her faults, is still dear to me; besides, weak myself, I cannot judge so harshly of her as those more virtuous or fortunate beings who have escaped unscathed from passion's burning ordeal." I paused, for George Tennant had again joined us, and with his calm fixed look addressing me, said, "Sir Freville, are you ready to answer my question—where is Aigline? mark me, all evasions are vain; nothing shall win me from my purpose."

"Captain Tennant," I replied, and I spoke mildly, for I felt for the additional pang I should inflict; "I regret that I cannot acquaint you, for since my confinement here by illness, she has quitted my house, leaving no trace by which to discover her present residence—and for this my uneasiness exceeds yours."

"Can this be true?" he said in a tone of surprise, addressing Mellish.

"It is," replied the latter.

"Then, Sir Freville, let me demand," he exclaimed, turning on me fiercely, "was it owing to your conduct that she fled, or—but no, it is not possible she can have chosen another," and the drops of agony rolled down his forehead.

I made no reply, and after a few moments he continued—"Captain Mac Duff acquainted me

that she had confided much of her history to him; that you and she lived unhappily; that she was torn by remorse; but of her elopement he could give no account, but supposed, that hearing of my being in London, she prevailed on you to seclude her till you both proceeded to India. It is dreadful to think how rapidly she has sunk into the very depths of sin!"

"Mac Duff has deceived you," I replied; "hear me patiently, and I will explain my conviction that he best knows where Aigline is to be found."

"Patience on such a subject!" he retorted, again losing his self command.

"Yet listen to him, George," said Mellish, "it is the only chance of discovering where Aigline now is; and though she is so lost as to be unworthy of all care, still, as her brother, you should learn her fate; for me, I care not what becomes of her." There was a wildness in his manner which startled Tennant, and for the first time awakened a suspicion of his attachment, and he abruptly said, 'I know, Charles, that in early youth, you loved Aigline with boyish fondness; and my poor mother with whom you were always a favourite, often said that if circumstances admitted, when the time came, she would gladly see you united; but from me the memory of these sentiments had nearly passed away, and now to suppose you could love her would be a reproach to your reason, to your

ly entreated; that subsequently I met with accident in the Green Park, in consequence of which I had removed to Arlington Street, and some days was too seriously ill to attend to business; that on recovering, my first enquiries of interest had been for Aigline, when I understood, taking advantage of my absence, she had

In her extenuation I admitted that for some time we had disagreed, in despite of which I loved her tenderly.

"Can I believe you, Sir Freville?" he demanded; "your best story is confused, and Captain Duff Gower appears a perfect gentleman; besides he has expressed the greatest anxiety about Aigline's fate, and assured me that even at the present instant he is making active enquiries relative to her."

"Captain Tennant, do you doubt my word?" he fiercely demanded.

"When you forfeited your oath," he replied, "and that under the most aggravated circumstances, who can believe your word? I for one cannot."

"This is unbearable," I exclaimed, "and permit me to say, that I am not answerable for my sister's weakness, since it was not I who first seduced her. I grieve to speak so harshly, but you compel me to it. I grieve still more that her present conduct confirms the painful truth."

He cast on me a look of withering scorn as he replied, "For her, she deserves every humiliation, every insult; you despise her not half so sincerely as I do; but hope not in this to find an excuse for your breach of faith to my departed father. Forget you, Sir Freville, your oath, sworn on the sword his liberal friendship presented—should necessity ever require it, to guard over Aigist with a brother's care, tenderness, and love! Know, that oath is recorded in a letter addressed at the period to me, when, suffering from broken health and fortunes, my unhappy parent, foreseeing the rapid period to his existence, rejoiced in securing such a guardian to his adored and then innocent daughter. How ill you have performed an oath voluntarily taken, and which his death should have rendered still more sacred, it is needless to say: no, Sir Freville, for you there is no excuse except in the generalities of your boasted cosmopolite philosophy, which, levelling all our best and holiest distinctions, breathes around an atmosphere of sin. The moral plague-spot may not be visible to the naked eye, but its corruptions are not the less destructive. Good heaven! that my beautiful sister should be one of its many victims!" Again a sigh burst forth.

Disguising my emotion, with as much dignity as I could assume, I answered, "Captain Tennant, as you presume to doubt my word, I shall hold me

further conversation with you. Whenever you arrange our meeting, of course you will acquaint me in the usual form."

"Nothing can be arranged," he replied, "till I discover where the wretched Aigline is—you are aware our meeting must be decisive; no interference of friends in such a case is admissible. Sir Freville, you have not only injured me past all forgiveness, but cast obloquy on the memory of my father, and of this you cannot even plead passion as a palliation. No; you immolated all of past kindness received from my too generous parents, all of present friendship to Mellish and to me, your companions and early friends, to the gratification of a cold, contemptible vanity; a sentiment of all others the most essentially selfish and debasing. Sir Freville, you are beneath my hatred, but I despise you more than language can express." And again resuming his attitude of unbending determination, he gazed sternly on me. Mellish, struggling to subdue his emotion, stood supporting himself on his sword.

While I deliberated what answer to make to a rudeness which, however my conduct justified, a sense of honour forbade my overlooking, the door opened, and to my great relief, being glad of any interruption to so distressing a scene, Thomas La Franck entered. An unconcerned spectator must have been struck by the contrast his mild

and clerical appearance offered to the showy uniforms and agitated faces of Tennant and Mellish. La Franck's form was very slight; his countenance pale, with light thin hair, and he must have been deemed plain but for the expression of his eloquent blue eyes, beaming with benevolence; in his address he was graceful and affectionate, and of all the persons I ever knew, he possessed the greatest facility of winning confidence; and though himself as free from sin as mortal man could be, his gentle nature ever poured the oil and wine of compassion and hope into the penitent soul. In his hands religion assumed its dearest, its holiest attribute—mercy. But to quit my digression. On his entrance he advanced instantly to Tennant, and clasping his hand, exclaimed, "My dear George, but for the deep grief that awaits you, how gladly should I welcome you back to Britain."

Returning his salute with equal cordiality, Tennant answered, "Thomas, you speak like a person of just feeling; you admit that my prospects are blighted; honour, pure unsullied honour, originating in high principles was my pride; if it sprang from ambition it was excusable; you know of Aigline's guilt—think what I must suffer."

"Let us for a moment," said La Franck, "revert to the past. How few years have passed since we four parted boys, and now we are men." He

paused a moment, and then with emotion added, "Whatever difference of passions may now exist among us, should they not be softened by the recollection that we have been schoolfellows—the pupils of my reverend father; and that for a period our pleasures and happiness were dependent on each other? My dear George, I would remind you of the last evening we sat together. You were to sail on the following morning for England. My father gave a farewell supper. We were a happy party; and many and sincere were the vows reciprocally given, that through all the troubles of this life we would preserve our friendship. Circumstances have rendered the observance of these vows difficult; but it is a Christian's part to forgive. Therefore come I here as a messenger of peace."

"Though an angel spoke, I could not—would not—forgive that villain!" vociferated Tennant, pointing to me.

"Nay, but hear me," said La Franck, mildly.

"Wherefore?" he retorted; "you cannot deny that Sir Freville, false to friendship, to gratitude, to truth—triumphing in the weakness of my lost sister, permitted her to be publicly seen as his victim. By the living God! my soul is tortured to madness, when I dwell on the disgrace; and I can scarcely refrain from instant vengeance."

"In the name of heaven, La Franck," cried

Mellish, "why did you revert to those reminiscences of the past? At that very supper, Aigline presided as mistress of the feast, claiming from each of us at least a brother's love and protection. This you know, and are aware of our present respective positions. I believe you to be incapable of ill; but had another acted so, I should have imputed it to wickedness, not forgetfulness."

La Franck replied mildly, "Forgive me. I had hoped by alluding to the past to awaken sentiments of affection—not these violent passions. I came here not only as a messenger of peace, but as a bearer of sorrow—a sorrow in which you will all participate." He paused, and tears started to his eyes.

While he was speaking, Tennant was striding up and down, struggling to regain self-command. Too much exhausted to stand, I had sunk back on the sofa, paying little attention to what was said, until Mellish vehemently exclaimed, "La Franck, as you hope for mercy, speak! Know you aught of Aigline? Can McDuff's horrible suggestion be true? Can she have perished, and by——." He could not proceed.

"Compose yourself," answered La Franck gently; "Aigline lives, and never contemplated the awful act of suicide."

"My God! how do I thank you!" cried Mel-

lish, as losing all control in the enthusiasm of gratitude, he fell on his knees, burying his face in his clasped hands.

"Rise, my dear friend," said Tennant, "and compose yourself. 'Tis pity that a heart so tender, so noble as yours, should be wasted on such a being."

"Tennant, you are right," he replied, rising; "and remember, you must all forget my weakness,—it was but momentary." And forcing a smile, he turned towards the window.

"Now, La Franck," said Tennant, "tell me what you know of my unworthy sister. Sir Freville Deerhurst asserts that she fled from his protection, to place herself under that of Captain Mc Duff Gower. Altogether it is a respectable business for a brother to examine into. However, it is my imperative duty to inquire into her fate. Happily, no affection now exists for her in my mind."

La Franck answered, "I cannot comprehend why Sir Freville should suspect Aigline of being with Captain Mc Duff, though, certainly, as the nephew of her departed husband, during your absence he was her most legitimate guardian; and now, I do remember, she told me that, on finding you were in London, she had entreated Mc Duff to take her to some place where there was no possibility of your meeting. Oh! George, if you

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my communication on the subject, influenced by her romantic and ill-regulated ideas of honour, she acquainted me that she declined to accept the money; still, in her answer to me, she spoke of you with a tenderness bordering on enthusiasm, bitterly condemning herself for the disgrace her levity had brought on you, and expatiating on the delight which, but for her unhappy fortune, your return would have given. 'In conclusion,' she said, 'La Franck, you cannot comprehend my misery; for none but the guilty could conceive its struggles. Here am I,—on the one hand torn by remorse, and on the other have not courage to reform, quit my present position, and retire to solitude—the only good the world now affords me.'

"On reading this letter," continued La Franck, "I was much affected. It convinced me that, however unworthy in the eyes of the world, Aigline's heart was not corrupt; and I offered up a fervent prayer that I might be endowed with grace to turn her from the life of vice which she led, to one of piety and true repentance; and in this blessed hope, on the very next day I went to the chateau where she had resided, but she and Sir Freville were gone, leaving no trace of their intended route. I say nothing of my disappointment. To be brief; after that I heard no more of her till the 23rd of last month, when surrounded

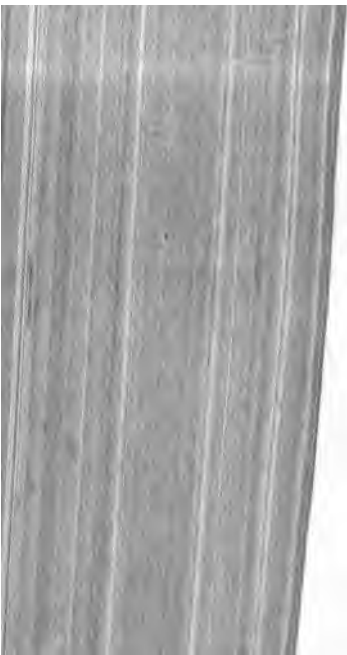
by a gallant party, I saw her riding in the park." Turning to me, he added, "You may remember, Freville, that I stopped your horse for the purpose of apprising you that Lord Plinlimmon and Mr. Aylsbury had arrived in London; and soon after, on quitting you, I beheld George Tennant,—of whose arrival I was not aware—on horseback, but standing so still, and with a countenance so fixed and pallid, that he might have been taken for a statue: while in the distance Aigline was galloping off at such speed, her courser's feet scarcely touched the earth. The whole truth flashed across my mind; the brother and sister had unexpectedly met; shame and grief were the consequence. In such a case, I hesitated how to act. While I still deliberated, you, George, started from your reverie, put the spurs to your horse, and dashed through the park, but in a different direction from the one Aigline had taken. Dispirited by the whole scene, I resolved to return home, if possible obtain an interview with you, Sir Freville, and apprise you of what I had witnessed.

"It chanced that late on the same evening I was summoned to administer to a lady on the point of death. Just as I was quitting her house, a servant arrived, and in breathless haste inquired if the physician was still there, as a lady at Sir Freville Deerhurst's house, in the immediate

neighbourhood, had been taken suddenly ill. Directing him where to seek medical attendance, I flew to Aigline, whom I found lying on a couch in the hall, and covered with blood. On my demanding the cause, her attendant acquainted me that about half an hour before, she had heard the hall bell rung with great violence, and on descending beheld Mrs. McMisserton lying on the marble floor in violent hysterics; that she raised her, and applied the usual restoratives, but without effect; the attacks became more violent, and in their struggles she apprehended a blood-vessel had burst, perceiving which she sent for a physician.

“To this account, Aigline, though scarcely able to speak, added, that she had met you, George, in the park, looking so like her departed mother; ‘and I am such a lost wretch,’ she shrieked, ‘that I could not again see him and survive.’

“I entreated her to be calm, and inquired after you, Sir Freville. She said you had imbibed some foolish groundless jealousy against Mc Duff Gower, and had quitted the house in anger, neglecting your solemn promise of removing her from England. ‘And Mc Duff, too,’ she said, ‘has deserted me in extremity; for not two hours ago he said he would return and bear me away.’ She then began to rave, and spoke very wildly. Fortunately the physician soon arrived; he con-



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Mc Duff Gower, was utterly without foundation ?”

“Except so far as I have just explained,” said La Franck.

“And she has not since seen him ?” persisted Mellish, whose jealousy conquered every other sentiment.

“Not until yesterday,” was the reply, “when by a chance I shall not delay to explain, he discovered where she was, and what she suffered from illness. Instantly, he called at the physician’s in Leicester Square, to inquire after her, and as he proposed soon going to Scotland, to learn if there was any service he could render. Grateful for such kindness, she consented to see him and Captain Tennant; the result of their conversation was, that no longer dreading to meet you, she has sent me to intreat your presence, hoping you will grant forgiveness for her many errors.”

“I could not see her, but to reproach her,” was his cold reply; “my inquiries after her proceeded from duty, not affection; being satisfied as to her safety, I desire no more. Sir Freville Deerhurst, I shall call on you to-morrow;” he was retiring, when La Franck called out with emotion, “George, this severity compels me to be more candid than I wished. I thought to break the sad intelligence that there is little hope of Aiglaine’s recovery; but

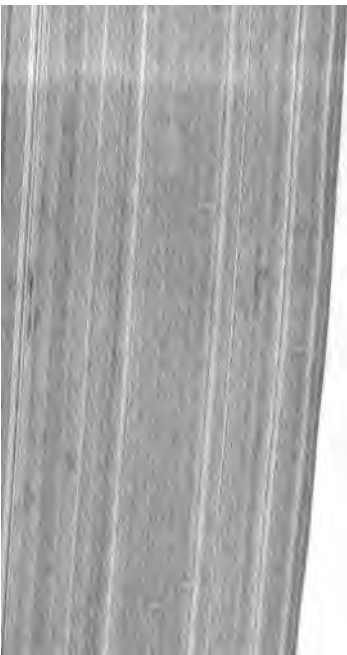


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first time speaking with tenderness, "bear to her my forgiveness and blessing; I could not see her and grant them. You both accuse me of being too harsh. I deny the charge. I would have forgiven Aigline much. Of her ill-assorted union, I shall not speak; it was partly my father's act, and whatever his faults, it is not for his son to censure them. No, I love and venerate his memory. For her attachment to d'Estonville Howard, so worthy of inspiring it, though highly culpable, still from all I had heard, I think my heart would have pleaded an excuse; and while I mourned her disgrace, pitying her misfortunes and weakness, subduing my mortification, I would still have received her as a sister; but neither love nor friendship can excuse her intimacy with Lord Beltrieve. And I am expected to forgive her, to countenance her, to forget how piously she had been educated, the domestic and moral home to which she had been accustomed, the tenderness she received. By heaven! if you would not have me curse her, you will not by pressing me to visit her, revive these recollections."

Heretofore, while this scene was passing, I had remained on the sofa in a state of weakness and excitement, which rendered me almost powerless; but when I saw Tennant preparing to retire, and witnessed the disappointment of La Franck, —though, like Mellish, I believed he had exagge-



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energy, romance, and misapplied generosity of her mind——” I paused; and then, in hurried accents added, “To describe her regret, her remorse at her fallen state, I shall repeat a sentence of her own, which, to my view, conveys a stronger idea of her struggles than the most elaborate language: ‘It is terrible,’ she was wont to say, ‘to have the body ministering to vice, while the spirit aspires after virtue.’”

“Merciful heaven!” exclaimed Mellish, who from the time I began to speak, had started up, “then Aigline loved me, and for my sake sacrificed her honour and risked her immortal soul to save mine: oh! wondrous proof of affection; before it the offerings of wealth, station,—nay, of life, fade to nothing; yet, I would rather have been hooted from the army as a coward or vagabond, than have brought a blush in her face. Generous, mistaken, noble-minded woman! why, oh! why was I so long kept in ignorance of this? Oh! what hours of sorrow it would have saved us both; but it is not too late—no, I feel it cannot be too late,” and he struck his breast—“that Aigline will live—live to be adored, honoured, nay, worshipped, at least by me. And you, Sir Freville Deerhurst,” he fiercely demanded, “why was I so long kept in ignorance of these facts? you shall account to me for this!”

"Colonel Mellish," I replied, "as a gentleman accepting your challenge, all your challenges, by heaven, I wish if I possessed so many lives they were multiplied to a thousand. I am ready to answer, but I repeat, I shall offer no other excuse for any act solely my own. However, as far as Aigline is concerned, it is my duty to defend her. Know then, that until the evening you surprised us together at my chateau near the Champs Elysées, she never acquainted me with those facts; though often from my unreasonable temper, and in the bitterness of jealousy,—for none of you could execrate her living with Lord Beletrieve more than I did—I reproached her for having done so. But, Colonel Mellish, after your departure, when I acquainted her that you purposed selling your commission to pay me back money anonymously forwarded, spite of my declared ignorance on the subject—her anxiety to save you from such an emergency, led her to make the confession. Would, I thought, that she had been equally ingenuous on the night I first visited her at Lord Beletrieve's hotel in Paris. How much crime it would have saved us both! But her chameleon-like temper, in its caprices and changes, involved herself and others."

"Sir Freville," said Tennant, "this is a strange elucidation, but perfectly in keeping with Aigline's

romantic notions. May I trouble you so far as to request that you will again repeat all the circumstances: you cannot be too particular."

"Sit down while you do so," said La Franck in his gentle voice; "for indeed, Freville, you are quite exhausted, and let me call for wine and water." This simple address, spoken in kindness and familiarity, affected me so deeply, it was some time ere I could speak. I then dwelt on every circumstance as each was delivered in full in Aigline's confession.

"Monster!" exclaimed Tennant, when he had heard this exposition of Beletrieve's baseness; "but what could be expected from a free-thinker, a disciple of Thomas Paine?"

"After this explanation, George, and in your sister's state, you cannot deny her the meeting she entreats. Even now she anxiously expects you," said La Franck.

"How came she," demanded Tennant, "so suddenly to conquer her dread of seeing me? All connected with her seems mysterious."

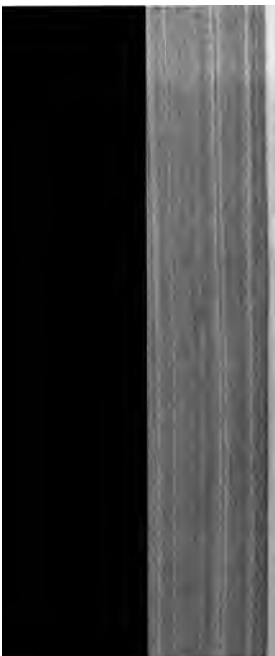
"In that there is no mystery," replied La Franck. "In the days of her pride, violence, and remorse, she would fly from all likely to despise or reproach her; but in the humility of true repentance, she bows in submission to the evils she has brought on herself, and in a Christian's hope, would obtain your forgiveness; besides, she who



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heard a word that was uttered; but he now advanced, holding his helmet in his hand. His form, always erect, was drawn up to its full height; his cheeks were flushed, and his brow, generally so fair and open, bore a look of determination very unusual to it. From his whole bearing you at once discovered he had conquered some inward feeling, and formed a resolution on a point upon which opposition might be expected. Twice he essayed to address Tennant, but utterance was gone. At length, he found words: at first his voice was hoarse and unnaturally deep, but as he proceeded, it became clear and distinct.

"George," he said, laying his hand on his shoulder, "hear me without interruption or argument; for all that can be said against my present resolution has been suggested by my own reason. You and La Franck have just heard Sir Freville Deerhurst's explanation of the motives which led Aigline to reside under the same roof with Beltrieve. And to that desperate act must be imputed her subsequent errors. Good heaven! it was dreadful. Well, neither of you can now doubt but that love for me, and gratitude for a few trifling services, were the origin of her fall. Thus, in point of fact, I was the cause—the source of her errors. For even a brother's pride and scrupulous honour found an excuse for the former



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bitterness, torn by endless regret at being deserted by him for whose preservation self was immolated? To act thus I must be a villain. No, George," he proceeded, again addressing Tennant, "my course is decided: loving me, Aigline cannot refuse my hand—we will be united. During the peace, I can quit the army without reproach. Change of scene, tranquillity of mind, and a southern clime will restore her health; a change will pass over our lives—'tis but the shifting of a scene. We will be all in all to each other, forming our own world. We shall soon learn to forget those who despise—deride us." As he uttered these words his fine countenance brightened, and his eyes beamed with happiness. Waving his hand, and putting on his helmet, he rushed down stairs; and, ere Tennant or La Franck—confounded at his declaration—could interfere, quitted the house.


La Franck was the first to speak. "This infatuation on Mellish's part," he observed, "is most unfortunate. Should he gain an interview with Aigline, probably a return of hemorrhage will occur, and fatal consequences result. I had best go and guard against it."

"You are too late," answered Tennant, who had been looking out of the window, "he has flown down the street with the speed of an arrow from its bow—the very passengers stop in

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CHAPTER XI.

AGAIN I was too miserable to heed the time; but as I lay, faint and exhausted, hours must have elapsed, and during this period not even Llewellyn called. At length I heard steps approach; I hailed them with pleasure; any person who broke in on a solitude, my troubled conscience rendered so terrible, must be welcome. The autumnal evening was rapidly closing; still there was sufficient light to render objects visible. The door burst open, and Mellish staggered in with unsteady steps. He was fearfully pale; it would seem as if in the short interval that had elapsed since he quitted the apartment, years had passed over his head. He advanced to the sofa, gazed wildly at me, shook his clenched hand in a threatening attitude; then uttering a groan, rushed into an inner apartment, which he instantly locked: but his deep sighs burst on my ear. La Franck had



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house. In his present state of mind it must be distressing in Mellish to act the host to one who had been his successful rival; then while you are here Tennant will not come, for you and he can never again meet but in hostility. Let me then accompany you to your own residence, and deem me not unkind in pressing this matter."

Not heeding his words, I vehemently demanded, "Am I not to see Aigline? must she too be torn from me without an adieu?"

He answered, "Anticipating your wish, I put the question to herself—and none objected; but she refused, and, methinks for the first time since her repentance, some worldly thoughts, some yearnings after the past disturbed her, for she said very mournfully, 'No, I could not see Freville and retain composure: in good or evil we so long went hand-in-hand together. No, I must see him no more—at least in this world—it would grieve me too much; besides, I would still retain in his memory the impress of what I was, not of this skeleton form.' And she stretched out her attenuated arm, adding, 'Bear to him my tenderest adieus; let him not in his regrets fancy I owed him unkindness—far otherwise. Tell him, amidst all my petulance I dearly loved him; and that if in my dying hour I retain my faculties, I will follow the example of his angel Clara, and pray

that he may return to his God. I would write," she added, "but, alas! the strength to do so is forever gone; and now, La Franck, if you would not disturb my soul's peace, speak no more of Freville Deerhurst." He paused, and then was offering some consolations, but I petulantly interrupted him, saying, "I am satisfied that Aigline will not see me, wherefore attempt softening these accumulated evils? True, it belongs to your ministry to scatter the good seed; but, mark me, my heart is equally indurated against it, and against human sympathy."

He sighed, and merely answered, "Freville, I can only pray for you."

"First," I said, "assist me to my carriage. I cannot move without support." And rising, I grasped his arm.

He looked wistfully in my face, remarking, "It has not been ordered;" then ringing the bell he gave directions, and in about a quarter of an hour Llewellyn entered and announced that it was in waiting.

"I do not require now your assistance," I said coldly to La Franck, as he offered me his arm: "go to Mellish, to him your services may be useful."

"Not during the first ebullitions of his grief," was the reply. "That past, his reason, aided by a

strong sense of religion, will console him under an irremediable misfortune."

"And I, too, would be alone," I said haughtily.

"Well, Freville, at present I shall not press my attentions," he replied. "May God comfort you." and gently pressing my hand he retired.

"Sir," remarked Llewellyn, "was there ever so good or meek a man as Mr. La Franck? he is like a saint, and in despite of the world's pride, I'd rather be as good a Christian than be the Prince Regent." By this time I had reached my chariot; he assisted me into it, and in a few moments I was conveyed to my splendid, solitary home.

Late on the following day La Franck called. I still sat over my untouched but elegantly appointed breakfast; and memory, ever busy, carried me back to the morning I had seen Lord Beletrieve in the same fashion, lingering over luxuries he could not enjoy,—though our want of appetite proceeded from far different causes; and in the bitterness of my soul I cursed the folly which had influenced me to follow his vain example. To my inquiries relative to Aigline, La Franck answered that she continued much in the same way; then with a sad smile he added, "Freville, again I intrude on you with a mission of peace. Remember, it is my vocation, and bear patiently with me."

I took his hand and said warmly, "Though I

cannot profit by your Christian charity, I am grateful for it."

He pressed my hand exclaiming, "Freville, I have an inward conviction that through God's holy assistance I shall yet win you to Heaven; but such blessed discourse is not my immediate business. I must abide my time. Now grant me your attention while I explain that on the day Aigline last saw Captain McDuff, learning from him that her brother had gone to Mellish's in quest of you, her clear mind—which retains its full powers—instantly suggested that a duel would be the consequence of your interview. So much did she suffer from the idea, that it conquered her dread of meeting George. Confiding to me his resolve of gaining his promise not to meet you in hostility, she sent me, as you already know, to entreat his presence in Leicester Square."

"And he," I remarked, "no doubt in his anger has refused to withdraw his challenge?"

"None could see her and do so," replied Le Franck, "so he requested me to hand you this note." I took it, and read aloud:—

"Sir Freville Deerhurst,—Sitting by the couch of my dying sister, and at her desire, I write to state she is so much affected at the idea of our hostile meeting, that with your permission I shall

withdraw my challenge, and in the presence of Colonel Mellish and Mr. La Franck, who were present at our interview, apologize for any offensive expressions I may have used.

Leicester Square.

GEORGE TENNANT."

"This abrupt note," observed La Franck with more emotion than I had ever seen him betray, "does not satisfy you, Freville; but surely you cannot, from any motive, still further afflict Aig-line, or distract her thoughts from Heaven. She says that she could not rest in her grave if the blood of either of you were on her head."

"Calm yourself," I replied, "I am not quite the wretch you all take me to be. La Franck, even your charity fails when I am the object,—but it matters not."

"Pardon, and mistake me not," he answered, in his gentle voice, "I only feared lest your ideas of military honour should interfere. Alas! will the time ever come when men, judging by the rules of reason and conscience, will learn to abjure such prejudices, and look back to the period they were countenanced, as we now do to the performance of some barbarous superstition?"

In my driest tone I said, "La Franck, preaching is a part of your vocation as well as peace-making. Am I expected to submit to that also

patiently? You may tax me beyond my humour: it were better taste not to do so."

He answered with a sad smile, "I shall take my leave when I learn what measures you mean to pursue with Tennant. I cannot endure that another pang should be added to poor Aigline's suffering; and besides, you are both my friends, so in my present interference I am selfish."

I answered petulantly, "I desire no man's friendship. What could it avail? However, La Franck, look not so distressed; I respect your meekness and good intentions. If you cannot exorcise the evil spirit that masters me, the fault is not yours. But here is my answer: if it pleases you not, dictate, and I shall obey. On this one point our sentiments agree." He took my note. I saw his hand tremble, for he doubted my purpose; but as he read, his countenance brightened.

"Sir Freville Deerhurst willingly accepts Captain Tennant's proposal to withdraw his challenge but as he never took any offence with Captain Tennant, he requires no apology."

"La Franck, does this note meet your wishes?" I said.

He caught my hand with unusual energy, exclaiming, "God bless you! for this will bring such

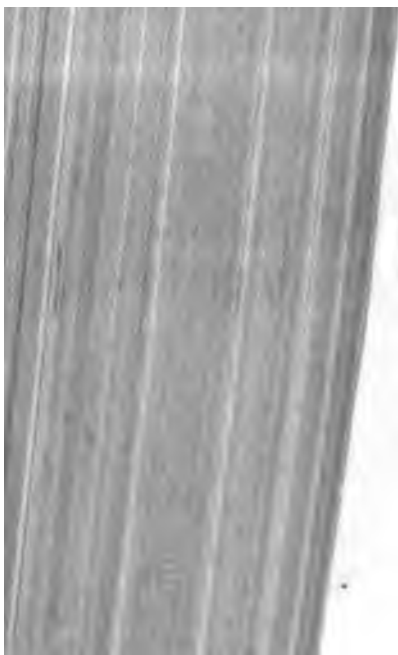
joy to Aigline. Freville, I always maintained that your heart was good, though your conduct might have been faulty ; but I must hurry to relieve our poor patient, for her excitement about this duel has hurried her quickly waning life. Say, have you no message for her ?”

Again I took my pen and wrote :—

“ Farewell, Aigline !—‘ a long farewell !’ They tell me you are dying. Thus all apologies for the past, all regrets for the present, are of no avail. Enough. If I possessed the power, readily would I lay down my life to preserve yours, yet death is the happiest lot. Farewell, Aigline ! Others may forget you—Freville never can !”

I dashed down my pen, and wept with uncontrollable violence. La Franck took up the paper, folded it, pressed my hand in his, then, without uttering a word, quitted the apartment.

In this faint sketch of the foregoing scenes, I have touched as lightly as possible on the awful events at the Terrace, merely recounting them, and I have avoided entering into any description of my own feelings. Indeed, no force of language, however eloquent, could convey to the mind of another the horror, remorse, despair, I suffered as Mellish acquainted me with the particulars of the



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perspective, in some degree have alleviated present evils. But they were mine—had opened a way to military honours, to royal favour; these anxiously sought-for objects of ambition or vanity. Thus, I could calculate to a nicety their full value, and I did so; and found that to me they were as useless as the vast treasures of the merchant described in the Eastern tale, who, having devoted all his thoughts and time to amass them, at length found himself in a desert, isolated from human society, and perishing with want, and who, as he lay in agonies amidst his heaps of gold and precious stones, would gladly have exchanged them all for one cup of water to cool his parching tongue. With equal pleasure would I have resigned my Oriental acquisitions, and again become the inhabitant of my wretched lodgings in Oxford Street, could I have enjoyed the peace of mind I knew ere my fatal sojourn at the Terrace. A learned divine—Dr. Butler—has asserted that no person ever hated himself, but no arguing can reason a man out of his convictions, and I positively hated myself with a malignity that, if practised towards another, must have been termed demoniacal. Far from trying to ameliorate my sufferings, I strove to increase them by conjuring up every image likely to add to my regrets. In idea, I would stand by the grave of Clara, and tearing



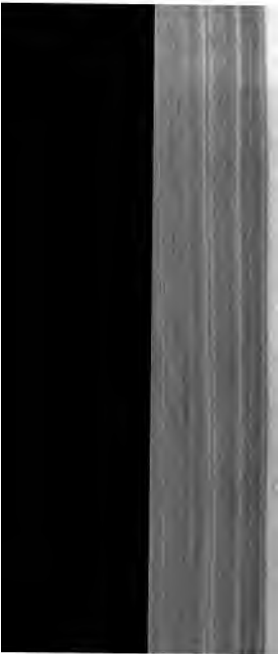
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as mere fantasies, still they go to prove the inward consciousness implanted in our nature of an over-seeing Providence. Vainly does the free-thinker strive to argue himself out of the universal doctrine of future pain or bliss, for—

“There is a divinity that stirs within us. Heaven itself points out a hereafter, and intimates eternity to man.”

And oh! how abject must be the wretch, how lost to all dignity, to all reflection, who, in place of triumphing in the glorious thought that his soul is an emanation from the great Creator of all, would level himself with the brute to die, to rot, to be no more. Yet such was the Cimmerian darkness into which I had sunk.

Days rolled on; my nervous irritability increased to such a degree that I could not find a moment's rest, but continually paced through the gilded apartments of my gorgeous residence, and when nature asserted her rights sought my broken slumbers on couches. Wherever I turned, proofs of Aigline's employments met my view; her music, her books, her work, all tastefully arranged. True, she was for ever gone; but the memory of her genius, her accomplishments, her taste, her enthusiasm, were impressed on every trifle. There was no forgetting her, and who could be found to supply the place of one so highly gifted? Twice,



where she was lying, and Mellish pacing up and down and then stopping to lamp which burned in one specting his sorrow I did kept out of his view.

It was on the 19th of sallied forth to Leicester Sq had troubled me during or sleep. Wishing to know the I desired Llewellyn to folk tions to place himself in the physician that he might be The moon was at its full, rain which fell in torrents, weather, I moved slowly, for and unequal. On reaching Mellish; he was leaning back rails, with his arms tightly

drowned." As he spoke, and ere I could reply, the light in the window was suddenly extinguished. On the instant Mellish threw forward his arms, clapped his hands together, then forcibly striking them on his head uttered a wild cry and rushed down the Square.

"What can this mean?" I said, addressing Llewellyn, at the same time grasping at the rails, for my strength was failing.

"Let us go home, sir," he said, in a low respectful voice; "it is all over with poor Mrs. Mac Misserton, for Mr. La Franck promised Colonel Mellish, who night after night has kept his melancholy watch, that when she breathed her last he would put out the light. There can be no mistake, for the doctor just told me so, and said that spite of the wicked life she had led it was a pity that one so handsome should die so young. However, it seems she turned out a fine Christian at the end, thanks to Mr. La Franck, who never stopped praying for her; but, sir, I beg pardon for my freedom of speech, and oh! master, I fear you are ill."—I had sunk on the earth.—"Shall I run and call the doctor?"

"Dare not," I called out, as my blood actually congealed at the idea of entering where lay Aigline a lifeless corse; but I faintly added, "call a coach; I would retire from this place." He

obeyed, and again I was quickly borne to my miserable home.

* * * *

To speak of the next four days, were to recount a repetition of my sufferings. On the 23rd, Aigline was to be interred near her father, in the cemetery of Mary-le-bone. Her obsequies were to be performed as privately as possible. Her beauty, her musical powers, her very position as a known inmate of my house, followed by her death, known to have resulted from the shock of her brother's return, caused a sensation, even in fashionable London; and a hundred false reports were circulated, which added to the romance of her past life, and something like sympathy was awakened.

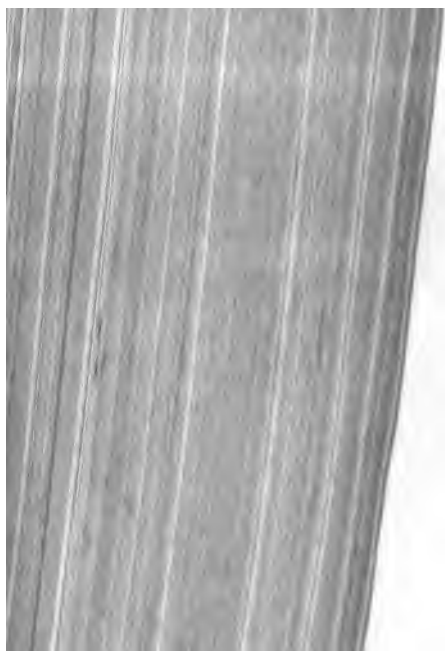
Aware of this, George Tennant, whose resentment, when he saw her dying, had yielded to compassion, still retaining the deepest sense of her disgrace, resolved to have her remains removed at the earliest hour of the morning, as torch-light would have roused observation; and he positively forbade the attendance of the physician and the servants of the house. From Llewellyn I learned these particulars, but I resolved to go.

* * * *

Wrapped in a great-coat, and slouched hat, I followed Aigline to her last sad home. Cold

anything have increased my regret, it was the bitter thought that, exactly on that day month, the memorable 23rd of September, she had ridden with me in Hyde Park, exciting the admiration of all classes. It was a cold, chill morning; a dense fog hung over the city, obscuring the light of the still burning lamps. Through the visible darkness I could just discover two mourning-coaches following the hearse; in the former were Tennant McDuff, in the other, La Franck and Mellish. There were no others, but the undertaker's men; and as I secretly followed, like a thief, my anger against Tennant rose, for I considered that I had the first right to pay this last respect. However, I shall no longer dwell on this scene, than merely to relate an occurrence, which, though trivial, by proving the genuine kindness of La Franck's disposition, led to the confidence, which, happily for myself, I afterwards placed in him.

I have remarked that my anger rose against Tennant, by whose orders I was to have been prohibited from attending at the funeral. There can be no doubt that, from that period, my thoughts occasionally wandered, though my condition did not amount to an aberration of mind. On the procession stopping at the gates of the cemetery, the mourners alighted from the coaches. I did not see George Tennant's countenance; but



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Mellish were at the head, La Frank and McDuff at the feet. "Yes, Aigline," I muttered, "it is all over; we were to have danced through the world, shaking our caps and bells; but death has stopped our mad progress." A loud, convulsive laugh escaped me. I advanced a few steps forward, doubting whether I should proceed; as I hesitated, the gates closed on the procession, and it was hid from my view; the driver whipped up his horses, and in a few minutes, whistling a merry tune, drove the empty hearse past where I stood.

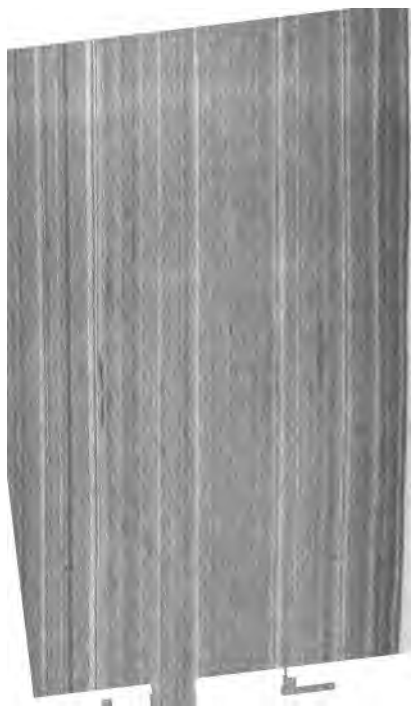
"And this is the world I regret her leaving!" I exclaimed, as, with slow, unequal steps, I wended my way back to Carlton Terrace. Ere I reached home my resolution was taken; from the very depths of despair I had found consolation—I would die!

THE conflict between good and evil, so long agitated me was at last over. I was no longer wavering in my purpose; I was no longer in fear I had conquered—I was no longer in doubt I would limit the period of suffering, I was no longer in doubt that consciousness, the power of reasoning, would be destroyed, and an unholy calm would be the result of being. Nay, more; in respect to the life granted by my Creator, I was no longer in doubt, I experienced a sense of triumph, I felt exalted me above my natural condition, I turned myself to my outward bearing

t, who was impatient to return, to Southamp-
. He mentioned that Colonel Mellish and
orge Tennant were to accompany them, and
n thence, after a few days, proceed to Ports-
uth, where the frigate of the latter lay at
hor; and that, subsequently, they purposed
ing for the Mediterranean, and would probably
t the Ionian Isles, as Tennant thought change
scene might conduce towards renovating Mel-
, who experienced the deepest affliction, and
o had been granted a long leave of absence by
Commander-in-chief.

received this intelligence with indifference,
as far as circumstances admitted, resumed my
al occupations, except music, which had been
favourite resource from boyhood until the
iod of Aigline's death, after which I never
ched an instrument. No, though the bitter
ers which flowed over my darkened soul
rified every other feeling, on that point I was
susceptible as ever; nay, even at this period,
en time and religion have modified my sorrow,
perfumes of flowers, the notes of harmony so
ociated with the memory of Clara and Aigline,
ken the most painful sensations.

Jewellyn was surprised and pleased at my
posure, and the ease with which I fell back
my former habits. Yet one difficulty arose to



Abstract

chosen heir. To prevent future litigation, under the guidance of Mr. Moneymore, to whom I merely stated that I purposed going a distant journey, and who, concluding I meant to the East, expressed no curiosity, I obtained the assistance of the first lawyers. As I dictated my will I would frequently observe, "If this appears eccentric, claimants may be to dispute on the plea of my being insane;" never suspecting my purpose, they laughed at the idea, assuring me they would guard against future litigation.

Mr. Moneymore was if possible more exact and prosy than formerly, the fop having entirely merged into the miser. So great was his veneration for his old father, he actually worried and tormented himself at the largeness of my expenditure, and groaned in spirit as the sums passed through his hands; thus engaged in business during the mornings, I rode afterwards into the parks or most frequented places, joining my acquaintances with more than my former familiarity. In the evenings I attended the opera or theatres, went to balls and assemblies, experiencing an inward triumph at my own tranquillity, while for the last time I took my part on the great theatre of a world from which I was desirous to retire. It was the commencement of November, and under the influence of my selfish and somewhat romantic character, I had formed

deadly act of suicide. Stretched forth the libation of sin as a beatified spirit;—reviving the memory, and so casting oblivion on the child!

No sooner did I re-appear, overwhelmed with attention, than I remember having received what I have already observed that to be a sensation: my deep mourning, this last compliment, the presence of countenance, for the gloom of the tomb to which I was rapidly descending, a shadow around me—awakened a favour; perhaps I should be saying, a curiosity to sound the thoughts; and let me be justified, if the sentiment did not emanate from the balm of compassion.

torpor. Then my suppressed grief, for I uttered no words of sorrow, sought no condolence, was probably the charm which awakened sympathy. Let me hope there are yet some who will impute this censure to a lingering feeling of misanthropy. Would it were so! for my mind shrinks from admitting the degeneracy of its own species. Of the then existing demoralization, none can dispute that it sprang from several causes:—the republicanism of France involved the levelling of morals and religion, as well as the factitious advantages of rank and regal power. True, the cosmopolite association was abolished; but the leaven of its polluted doctrines worked its way, supported by the writings of Thomas Paine and his imitators, while the devastations of the Peninsular war, accustoming the mind to scenes of violence and death, followed by the influx of foreigners into Britain, and the facility of visiting distant climes, wrought a change of manners and opinions with a rapidity unparalleled in the records of history. What heretofore had been the slow work of ages, was now in a few short years effected. The fabric of prejudices and forms—if they were prejudices—erected and venerated by our forefathers was hurled to the ground, and a new and lighter order of things arose.

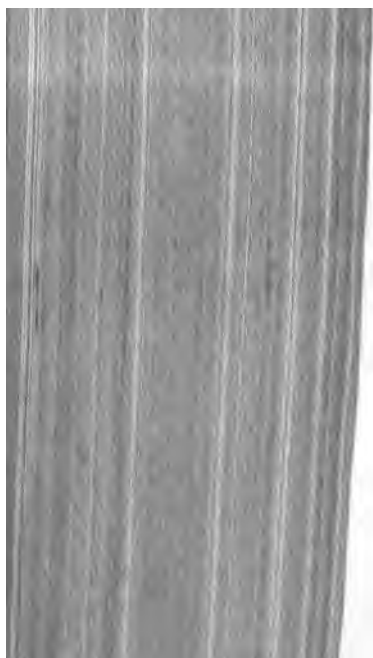
On the Allies coming to England, and their in-

introduction of the different costumes, habits, and languages of their respective countries, it was not unaptly said that the ponderous tower raised by our ancestors as a sign to future ages of their strength and power, cemented by their blood, was by the confusion of tongues destroyed, never to be rebuilt. Even genius, whose province it is to uphold all that is noble and exalted, and which should never stoop to the fashion of the times, lent herself to the scattering of our best and holiest feelings. Thus, the life of open profligacy I had led, far from meeting rebuke, awakened an interest in my favour. I shall here mention another instance of the fantastic folly of society.

The poetry of Lord Byron, then lately published, had awakened the most enthusiastic admiration among those capable of appreciating his genius; and the many who were not, thought it right to appear equally charmed: consequently, the generality of the fashionable young ladies became his most devoted admirers; and each gentle bosom secretly heaved to be the Medora, Gulnare, or Leila of some iron-handed Corsair, or dark-browed Giaour, characters rather difficult to be found in the London saloons, whose atmosphere is little calculated for the heroic or terrible, though it may nourish vices even more destructive. Thus,

no sooner did I appear in my sables, looking as poor Aigline in her playful mood would have said, like the Knight of the Doleful Countenance, or Don Quixote, when he discovered that all his prowess had been wielded against a windmill, than I became an object of profound interest to the fair romancers, and as my wealth made me a very desirable match, the elders of families by no means interfered; and, moreover, as the daughters of the Isles are eminently beautiful, it is scarcely a figure of speech to say, that, wherever I moved, the Loves and Graces fluttered around me, and my every glance was met by soft supplicating blue eyes, or sparkling dark ones, which seemed to woo return. But my heart was indurated, and the pretty triflers might as well have hoped to inspire the statues which adorned their fathers' palaces.

But while I viewed such coquetry with indifference, contempt against my own sex was roused to indignation, when I discovered that I had become a model for a new order of fashionables. My air of despondency, the *insouciance* of my manner resulting from despair, were imitated or rather caricatured; and among my most devoted admirers I classed Lord Chancery, and his set. He who in youth had aped the fopperies and vices of the ancient Beletrieve, now in more advanced life



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rangements were finally settled, and strange to say, my health, which under powerful excitement had so severely suffered, during this deadly calm of my soul, was in a great measure reinstated.

On the 20th I proposed leaving London for Yorkshire. In the mean time the news reached me that Lord Beletrieve had come in for a large fortune by the death of his Norwich uncle:—more wonderful still, that he was going to be united to the youngest Miss Vilmont. These events formed the *on dit* of London, exciting a strong sensation. The parties had arrived in town to make splendid preparations for the nuptials.

Lord Beletrieve going to be married! It was passing strange,—and to Julia Vilmont! My mind was roused from its apathy. The world, its conventions and trifles, again pressed on my soul, and inflicted a strange pang of agony, as I reflected that the Belial would be revelling in wealth, and blest with a youthful and not unlovely bride, while his beautiful victim Aigline lay festering in the early grave to which his villany had hurried her. And I resolved on going that evening to Holland House, where I was an invited guest, and was almost certain of meeting Lord Beletrieve. I wished to discover whether he felt any regret for Aigline. I resolved to sound him by speaking of

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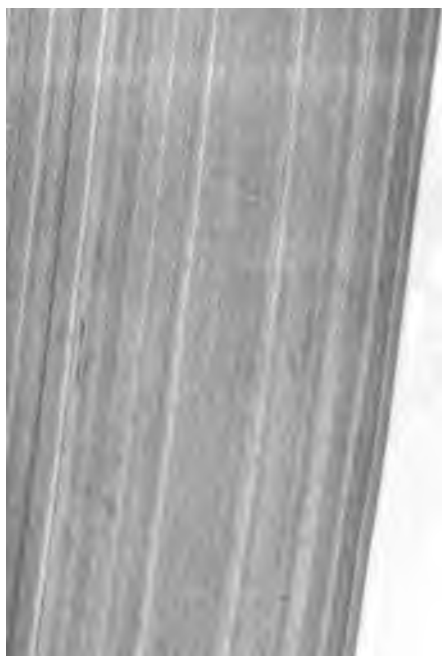
an excitement, solely however resulting from curiosity: for me, a thousand painful recollections passed over my heart. I could not command my emotion, but I strove hard to disguise it. I had resolution to press forward with the crowd who advanced to meet him. I saw much sneering, and heard tittering. At length the Duchess of G——, full of mischievous glee, came over, and catching me by the hand, exclaimed, "This way, this way, Sir Freville; why are you so slow in paying your compliments to your master in the Zoppo graces, and to whom you are now going to be connected through your noble relative the Vilmonts?" This was said rapidly, and with joyous laughter, in which several joined, and a way was cleared for us; and then I saw Lord Beletrieve. It appeared the gout had flown to his head, and ended in a stroke of paralysis. There he stood, his gaunt bending form elaborately decked out in the cavalier fashion he had early adopted, and which had once sat so gracefully on him, but was now quite grotesque. He was so lame that he dragged forward his left leg with difficulty; his countenance was slightly distorted, and he was half a driveller; and of his original, nothing remained but occasional burstings forth of an unconquerable personal vanity, and a mawkish admiration of the fair sex. Then to witness the

homage and fulsome attentions of the Vilmonts, who in their grasping after wealth had conquered every better feeling; worse again, the sneering efforts of the Chanceley set to render this remnant of mortality, this thing of clay which they had once so exclusively worshipped, more contemptible, more absurd. Oh! it was a scene to humble human pride,—to make man abhor his own nature. A shudder passed over me. Good heaven! I thought, how could my reason ever have been so obtuse as to fix its proudest emulation on being such a thing as that! and unconsciously I stretched out my right arm, and pointed my finger towards him. He concluded that I beckoned him forward, and fixed his vacant eye on me, simpering with his distorted features, and then with something of the air of proud condescension which formerly had so well become him, obliging others to feel his consciousness of superiority, he was advancing, followed by the Vilmonts, when mortified beyond endurance I lost all self-command, and with a look of disgust turned rudely away. The expression, the movement, were observed, and instantly imputed to jealousy of Julia Vilmont. All this I at once discovered. Offended, irritated, I hurried from the house, provoked at my own want of temper, resolving never again to subject myself to an encounter with Lord Beletrieve, and rejoicing

that in a few short days I should be removed from a world of which my abhorrence daily increased.

* * * *

I am aware that my entering into a detail of circumstances apparently so frivolous on the eve of the awful crime I meditated, may appear out of place, but this, my tale, is no wild fiction but a *stern reality*; and I wish to lay before those for whose perusal I expressly write the exact state of my mind at that period—"nothing extenuating," if but to do honour to him, who by patience, meekness, and true christian piety, converted my perishing soul from an infidelity the more dangerous and impenetrable because, like the philosophy of the Sadducees of old, it was founded on wilful presumption and supposed wisdom. To you, La Franck, now exalted by merit to the highest honours of the Church, of which you are at once an example and an ornament, this meed of praise is superfluous; yet, as an offering of gratitude from one on whom you have conferred a god-like benefit, it may not be unacceptable.



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pletely stuck fast. The evening was rapidly closing, so I had no choice but to walk back to the town we had left, and which lay at the distance of several miles, while Llewellyn went in search of assistance to clear away the snow so as to release the horses. All this was very annoying, more particularly as I had brought it on by my own obstinacy; and, although I spared no money to expedite my journey over which I had at first loitered, I did not reach F—— until very late on the 24th; and, to render the circumstance more provoking, on stopping at the only hotel it contained I found it so crowded that at first I was refused admittance. At length, yielding to the influence of Llewellyn's eloquence, which was strengthened by gold, the landlady promised to accommodate me with her own apartment. However, as it required some preparation, I had no alternative but to enter the coffee-room, where several guests were, I was told, congregated.

It was a large old-fashioned apartment, with a huge fire-place well replenished with coal and logs of wood that sent forth a blaze which seemed to defy the storm that pattered against the windows; near this stood several gentlemen, in true English fashion, only consulting their own comfort, while others sat at small tables, which stood around; and, besides, more substantial fare was furnished,

with mulled-port and brandy-punch, the fumes which impregnated the atmosphere. On the land lady, with something like an apology for the intrusion, ushering me in—no doubt, struck by a pale exhausted look, some of the party politely made way near the fire, pointing to an arm-chair into which I sank. One of the gentlemen handed me some mulled-port. Having drunk a small quantity I thanked him, observing that I had been on my way and was suffering from the cold; then leaning back I closed my eyes as if in sleep, for dreaded being expected to join in the conversation.

After a time the conversation I had interrupted was resumed, and I found that the reason of such a number being collected at the hotel was in consequence of a meeting of magistrates, which, owing to some expected riots, had been held in York and on their return the gentlemen of the neighbourhood had sought protection from the stars. At first nothing was spoken of but the magistracy business, and each poured forth his legal wisdom in a most declamatory tone. Then came on talk about hunting; here two or three gentlemen who had lately returned from Leicestershire took the lead, and horses, dogs, covers were discussed but with an evident respect for the opinion of the Leicestershire sportsmen. Among the most animated on this subject was old Dick Gellat, an

ing as fresh as the first day I had met him at our mess; but I had little fear of his recognizing me. It had so chanced that we had never been introduced; then I was sadly altered, and on entering had been announced as Mr. Vilmont.

After a vast deal of light talking, supported by deep draughts, and to which I paid no attention, I was roused by hearing Dick Collet roaring out, "By the bye, boys, what sort of a fellow is this Colonel Huntall who has taken the Terrace? I know he is famous on the turf, but that is not our forte; tell us, are we likely to find him a good hospitable fellow, with a well-filled cellar, and a heart to give his wine freely? That is the man for me, boys. I would wager that the Terrace parks supply as fine venison as any in England; but we must have good claret to wash it down—eh, boys?"

"He is a devilish good fellow, I can tell you," stammered out a young man who had been drinking from the commencement; "though he won a cool five thousand from me at the Derby last year; but it was honourably won, and I may have my revenge yet; besides, he is so spirited, that though he has an income of some fifteen thousand a-year, he is always over head and ears in debt, for he spends as good as forty."

"Just the man we want," vociferated Collet; "a happy exchange, boys, for the proud, stately,

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to the company, "that all the younger puppies should be drowned, to secure more generous nourishment to the first-born cur."

"You may laugh," said the young man good humouredly, "but the joke is confoundedly against me, being the eldest son of a most prolific pair. My old dad tauntingly tells me that I shall not be better off than my youngest brother, and that will be poor as needs be; and then the incumbrance of the aforesaid numerous progeny has so tamed down his spirit, that he is as tame as a mouse. No chance of his taking a mad fit some moonlight night, and flinging some half dozen of the youngsters into the lake, though there is one dark and deep enough for the purpose a few perches from our thickly inhabited family mansion."

This wise speech met general approbation, and the fate of the youth of many brothers was commiserated; then the first speaker cried out, "Collet, you must purchase Lady Cora; she is for sale. You could not find a nobler animal; she is fleet as a deer, and the best fencer in England; high price though, not a sous under seven hundred guineas. I would have been at her, only no cash here," and he struck his pocket; "but you, old boy, have the needful in abundance—nothing like it, Dick."

"Ay, my gay youngster," he replied, with an

affected sigh, "true, I have the cash, but not the mettle; being lack of that, I must admit that Mr Egbert's ladies were never altogether to my taste. I leave them to some gallant son of Man." This *jeu d'esprit* at the expense of the Eastvilles was received with laughter, and puns and jokes better untold, were bandied about.

I know not how to describe my sentiments as I listened to this coarse and heartless talk—the amounting to consternation. Father of mercy! was it possible that events which comprised the deepest woes to which even man's fallen state is liable had become the subject of merriment and ribaldry? Could not even the helplessness and innocence of childhood awaken sympathy? And then a chill passed over my spirit as I anticipated the jokes which my awful death would give rise, and for the first time I hesitated. Would it not be better to perform the deed in some sequestered spot, where my body might not be discovered? Then I bitterly mocked my own weakness at being moved by such men. However, a fresh impetus had been given to my feelings, and I felt as if existence even for one night longer, was unbearable; so I arose, advanced to the window, and drawing back the curtain, looked out. The wind was hushed—there was no moon, and all was pitch-dark. A sigh escaped me—some of the gentlemen enter

forward, and looking over my shoulder, one of them exclaimed, "It really is provoking; no chance of a hunt on Saint Stephen's day, except we are satisfied with wren-hunting. No help for misfortunes; we must bear up like men;" and then the most drunken began to sing, "The Wren, the Wren, the King of all birds," &c., &c. This scene strongly reminded me of my father; and in connexion with everything else I had heard, increased my morbid disgust with all around—and I rushed from the apartment. As I stood in the hall waiting till a bell I had rung with violence was answered, I heard old Collet exclaim, "Hem, trust me if that isn't the saddest-looking rascal I ever beheld. Poor devil! he seems in the last stage of consumption." "Meagre food for the worms these Christmas times," answered another. I could stand such jesting no longer, and was forcing open the hall-door to escape from the house, when Llewellyn laid his hand on my shoulder, and in respectful accents said, "Sir Freville, let me persuade you to retire to your apartment, which is now in readiness; the gentlemen within are for a carouse, and unpleasant words may ensue." I was so subdued, so humbled by an inward consciousness that my sorrows and death, in place of awakening sympathy, would only be a subject for renewed laughter, that I

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hostess—was on the ground floor, and its only window, which was low, fronted the principal street of F——. I should think it might have been about half-past nine when I was roused from my slumber by hearing a multitude of voices screaming out “A merry Christmas to you, and a happy new year.” I started up with a peevish exclamation: on the instant Llewellyn entered grinning; his rosy Welsh cheeks were actually creaming and dimpling with glee, as in his most vernacular tongue he called out, “A great many happy new years to you, Sir Freville; spite of the snow-shower it is a glorious morning; I love a bright Christmas; it makes the children so happy; and then it reminds me of old friends, and old times; oh, Sir Freville, forgive the freedom on this blessed day; but do you remember when I was wont to help you to make the little snow-balls to throw at Miss Clara’s window at the old parsonage of Cader Idris, and how she used to pelt you back with figs and sugar plums; and Mrs. Waller scolding her for wasting them, and I snatching them up? Well, it is all as fresh in my memory as if it only happened yesterday.” While he chattered in this manner he had reached the couch on which I was sitting, and no doubt looking very wretched, for no sooner did he see me, than he cried out, “Oh! Lord, Sir Freville, you



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gossip, caught up hand-balls of snow. Nor was this all. The hotel, even at that early hour, was impregnated with the odour of the good living, which was to commemorate the festival; and then the press and hurry among the servants as to who was to go to church, who stay at home, and the loud dissonant voice of the landlady, as she commanded peace. Oh! how strange, how insignificant, all this appeared to me on the eve of an eternity, beyond which I did not dare to look. Yet even then my benighted understanding admitted how much more happiness fell to the lot of those occupied and satisfied by such employments, than to the visionary who, in fancied exaltation of mind, despises the simple avocations and duties of life.

Llewellyn entered, to know whether I was going to church. I answered in the negative, telling him that he might, if he desired to do so. As he was retiring, methought he looked anxiously in my face, and I stood at the window till I saw him quit the house. I then loaded one of my pistols. It was double-barrelled. I knew my hand was steady to its purpose, and that the first bullet would secure instant annihilation; and again, my heart swelled with the impotent, fiend-like triumph of conquering my nature. I now laid aside my watch and a well-filled purse, writ-

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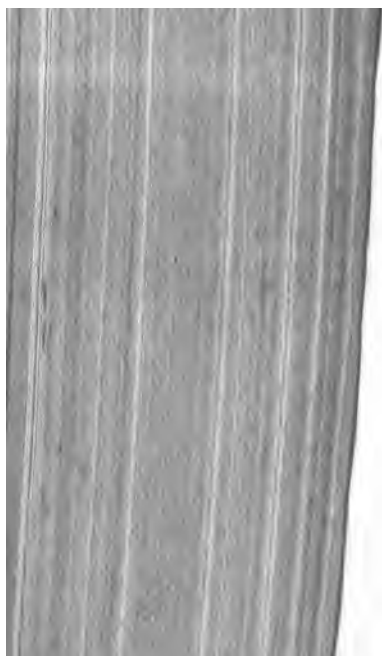
half an hour I had the satisfaction of seeing several hurry by, while the renewed noise and confusion which resounded through the hotel bore evidence that its bustling mistress had come back to superintend her culinary preparations.

Apprehensive of Llewellyn's return, I determined to quit the hotel and walk about till opportunity offered; so, protecting myself from the cold, and placing my pistol in my bosom, I sallied forth, directing my steps towards St. Mary's. It was an old church, with a tall tapering spire. There was nothing remarkable or imposing in either. It stood nearly in the centre of a large burial-ground. The street in which the hotel was situated extended to its very gates. On the other side lay a piece of ground called the Green, though it little deserved its verdant title. This formerly had been a commonage, and had been intersected with walks and bowers, of which nothing now remained but a couple of immense horse-chestnut-trees, with rustic benches beneath. I paused for a moment at the gates of the cemetery, and saw it was still crowded with carriages. I then, for the first time, recollected that, on such a festival, the pious would remain to communicate. Sneering at their folly, and cursing the delay, I thought, would it not be as well to return for another hour? Then I apprehended meeting Llewellyn. While

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He was dressed in thin nankeen trowsers, and a blue velvet jacket, once richly embroidered with gold, but now miserably tarnished, and it was so small that it left his chest exposed to the pelting storm. He had on a shabby felt hat, too large; and a pair of slip-shod shoes, which left him no power to run; and chilled and trembling from the piercing cold, he moved slowly onward, followed by an old lame Newfoundland dog; and ever and anon, as the snow swept over his face, he stopped to wipe it off, and then the old dog would rest his paws on his shoulders and lick him; after which they would again set forward, and so on.

There was a patient endurance in the bearing of this desolate boy that awakened sympathy. Probably his tarnished finery was the offering of charity; but, however obtained, it offered no protection from the weather. Could it be that, so early in life, he had experienced vicissitudes? One belief pressed on my heart: he must be an orphan; none other could be so cruelly neglected. And his spirit was already broken, for around him he saw his fellow children at play, yet he sought not to join them; and he witnessed tender mothers and fond fathers sheltering them, yet he looked for no kindness, except in his dumb companion, and as it licked his hand, he would throw his little arm round its shaggy back, as if fearing that it too might desert him.



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“I know it is a weakness,” I said, in apology to myself for an interest I could not conquer, “but I must, and will, do something for that poor orphan.” I rose with the intention of approaching and making some inquiries, when, cracking his whip and jokes, up cantered old Dick Collet, to find shelter from a sudden gust of wind, which came winged with snow. He was one of your popular men, and had a word for every one, so there was jostling and pushing to make way for him and his horse; dreading his observation, to elude it, I again sat down, and for the next half hour, or more, was obliged to listen to his compliments and witticisms; and another elapsed, ere he and his companions retired from the shelter. At length all were gone—I was alone.



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I entered the cemetery. There was a wide walk which went all round, and this was planted on either side with old elms and mountain-ash ; the former, very tall, stately trees, were pruned up to their tops, and, being covered with snow, as I advanced—and I must admit my steps were no longer steady—it appeared as if the shrouded inhabitants of the tomb had risen, to welcome me to their drear abode ; and I tried to smile at the idea, and I felt for my pistol, and plucked up my courage, which, spite of the “thick-coming fancies” which flitted across my imagination, had never deviated from its stern purpose.

There was some superstition, of whose origin I am ignorant, which taught the people of F—to dislike having their friends buried near the east window of the church, and there Clara’s “un-lettered grave” was placed ; to reach it, I had to quit the walk, and step over many a lonely tomb. From its position and solitariness, there was no mistaking it, yet I am positive, had Clara’s grave been among thousands, my throbbing heart would have recognised it. As I advanced, I rejoiced that I was so near death, and indulged the frantic, horrible wish, that my heart’s blood might penetrate the earth, so as to descend upon her coffin, It is needless to say, to what a pitch my imagination was raised, when it begot and entertained such a wild and hideous fancy.

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patted its shaggy head, and followed to the grave, guessing the cause of its anxiety, when stretched on it, apparently lifeless and nearly covered with snow, I beheld the deserted child who had awakened my sympathy on the Green, but whom in a few minutes after I had totally forgotten. One of the little arms was stretched out; he appeared quite dead, and the dog licking the hands every now then renewed its doleful cries. I raised the boy, shook away the snow, and then pulled off the hat which had fallen over its face; this must soon have suffocated him; as it was it had kept his face dry and warm, so when I uncovered it, though the eyes were closed and the features rigid, I at once recognized Herbert Eastville, Clara's best beloved child, my own endearing little companion during my sojourn at the Terrace. There was no mistaking the peculiar and Roman cast of features, the well-marked eyebrow, the raven hair, and the strong likeness to my departed mother. No, there was no mistaking. My mind became quite bewildered. Had the waters given up their prey? had I been deceived by a fearful tale? did my reason wander? I knew not what to think. I caught the boy in my arms; I pressed him to my warm and quickly throbbing bosom; I strove to infuse my breath into his cold lips, but no symptom of life rewarded my cares. "He is dead,



"If you dismissed me for it," he answered, "I am glad that I saved both your body and soul; but oh! I wish you had not killed the poor dog."

I looked and saw the Newfoundland expiring: the bullet had passed through his chest. In the last agony he was trying to lick Herbert's hand. I felt shocked at the poor brute's fate, and called out, "Llewellyn, save it, and you shall be largely rewarded."

He answered significantly, "Sir Freville, the art of man could not do so; oh! it is very easy to take away life, but no human power can restore it." With these words he snatched up the pistol, and ere I suspected his intention, fired off the other bullet into the air. I was so indignant, that I made a blow at him, exclaiming with vehemence, "To the inn this instant, and this day, nay, this hour, quit my service."

"As you please, Sir," he coldly answered.

I felt abashed at his manner. I had lost my moral influence over a menial: he had detected me in the act of self-destruction, and it gave him a certain superiority and command over me; besides this, I was incensed and mortified that I had been thwarted in my purpose. But for his interference, the awful deed had been perpetrated ere this; and now I had again to contemplate it, for my resolution by no means varied. At this in-

stant Llewellyn, who, loth to leave me, was
battering near, in a tone of terror said, "Oh my
Freylla, how could you open the grave and take
up this poor child? As I live, it is Master Her-
bert. Mrs. Waller often showed him to me at
the Terrace, and the servants joked at his being so
like yourself: natural enough, as I always said,
for you were cousins: well it is wonderful how
fresh he looks, after being so long buried: and
what an odd dress for a corpse. For the life of
me, I cannot understand it!"

"Fool!" I replied, "that child was walking on
the Green about an hour ago, or less: go, I say,
you have no business here."

Not attending to my dismissal of him, he
caught up the child, saying, "Less than an hour
ago! then perhaps he is not dead, only rigid: let
us try, Sir." And he tore off the stiffened dress,
and began rubbing him with snow-balls, calling on
me to assist.

I readily obeyed, exclaiming, "Restore him, and
I will forgive you all: nay more, I will be your
friend."

He answered, but I was too much agitated to
hear his words. Soon, and I saw the blood begin
to circulate under the child's skin, and there was
a slight movement in his limbs and chest: my
feelings of suspense amounted to agony. Llewel-

lyn now with his broad grin drew forth a flask of brandy, making some remarks on the advantages of being so well prepared. Diluting it with the snow-water, he poured a few drops down the child's throat. It caused a slight convulsion which passed off, and after some deep heavy sighs, respiration became more easy, and Herbert opened his large dark eyes, and, in low, weak accents, cried out, "Bluff, Bluff,"—it was the dog's name.

Llewellyn fell on his knees, and poured forth a prayer, concluding it by remarking, "Oh, Sir Freville, you came here to take away life, but by the mercy of God you have not only been saved from the sin, but you have restored this poor child. This ought to make a good Christian of you for the rest of your life. If Mr. La Franck was here what a fine sermon he would preach about it."

Even while he was talking he drew off his waistcoat to wrap round Herbert, and then, as he still appeared lethargic, said, "Hold one of his hands, Sir, and I will take the other, and make him run round and round this melancholy place."

I mechanically did what was suggested, and soon witnessed the good effects of the exercise, for it fully restored circulation; and though evidently weak, the boy was quite warm and lively. I now addressed him tenderly, asking his name.

"It is Herbert," he said.



"Yes, I am so glad; but you will let poor Bluff come too."

"Would it were in my power," I muttered; then turning to Llewellyn, I remarked, "By whatever means this child's life was saved, it is certain that none but the wretch Nelly Dudgeon is acquainted with his existence. It is very mysterious; but what is more so is, that the child should be found in the neighbourhood of the Terrace. Say, until we penetrate the cause, can I depend on your assistance and secrecy? Name your reward."

"As to that, Sir Freville," he replied, "I shall receive none. Every one knows the boy is your own, so in spite of all the laws that ever was made, you have the best right to him."

I was dishonourable enough, even at the grave of the injured Clara, not to deny the charge, but equivocally said, "My present object would be to secrete him, so that no one in the event of his being missed, could trace him to me."

He paused for a moment, then rubbing his hands, cried out, "I have it all settled; let you, Sir Freville, walk back to the hotel, go into the public room, and appear cheerful; they were insinuating lest night, that you were beside yourself; and if a person has a secret, the less remarkable he appears the better: well then, I will slip this



Herbert, poor Bluff is gone to heaven to mama and Mrs. Waller."

"Then I will go too," he answered; and he lay quietly down near the dog. "What is to be done?" I said anxiously.

"Sir Freville, you don't understand children," replied Llewellyn with a consequential air; then turning to the child, with affected anger he cried, "As you are so obstinate, I shall go for Nelly Dudgeon." Herbert stood up in terror. "Come to me," I exclaimed, reaching out my arms, "and she shall not touch you." He actually bounded up, clinging to my neck, and I hurried with him to the gates of the cemetery; there I committed him to Llewellyn, and in pursuance of our plan hastened to the hotel, joined the party in the general apartment, chatted cheerfully for some time, then ordering dinner to be served in my own chamber, retired, and felt a glow of pleasure, such as I had not experienced for a long time, at finding Herbert sitting by my fire. He was wrapped in a silk dressing gown of mine, and seemed quite delighted with his new position. He was a lovely boy, with long black ringlets falling down his shoulders; but must have been harshly treated; for he was as timid as a hare, and so docile, that he never, except in the instance of Bluff, disputed a command.

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was to be doubled when means were taken to remove the boy from the apprehended danger. According to this arrangement, on the evening of the day that she quitted the Terrace, ostensibly to depart by the York mail,—for she knew the cunning attending Sir Egbert's state of mind would render him watchful,—Mrs. Waller secretly returned to the Terrace, and Herbert slept securely in her arms.

Weeks rolled on, and Sir Egbert never appeared; so that a less intelligent or attached nurse would have been off her guard. But Mrs. Waller had engaged two men to watch his movements, and they reported his nightly wanderings and occasional cries; so while she mourned his terrible fate, she never neglected her innocent charge. With Dr. Jerold's direction she was unacquainted, and she knew Mr. Aylsbury and Mr. Coalston were on the Continent. Consequently she had no sincerely attached friend on whom to depend; and this doubly attached her to the devoted boy.

On the night of the storm, by Nelly Dudgeon's advice, she removed with Herbert to the apartment I had occupied. Bluff, of whom Lady Eastville had been very fond, and who was the constant attendant of the boy, permitting him to mount his back and pull him about, lay at the

foot of the bed. They all slept, when Mrs. Waller was awakened by the bursting open of the glass door or window, and the next moment Sir Egbert stood before her. The shock was so great, her senses failed. When memory returned, she saw Sir Egbert glaring like a tiger, and making a grasp at Herbert, whom she vainly strove to protect from his fury. Her terror was dreadful:—she called loudly for assistance, but her voice was lost in the roaring of the storm. She saw the maniac in the act of clasp^{ing} the child's throat; she struggled, but her efforts were faint. Just then, with a deep growl, Bluff made a spring, and fastened his teeth in Sir Egbert's arm. Frantic with pain, he let Herbert fall; Mrs. Waller caught him in her arms, but unfortunately, every passage had been carefully barred, so there was no egress but through the shattered window. As she darted towards it, Sir Egbert twisted his hand in the child's hair—desperation gave her strength—she tore him away, leaving behind the dark ringlets streaming with blood; then quickly rushed from the chamber, bounded past the Terrace walk, and with a speed winged with terror, flew down the lawn towards the lake. In the meantime, Sir Egbert endeavoured to dash off the dog, which sagaciously strove to prevent his following; at length the faithful animal received a blow, which,

by breaking one of its hinder legs, in a great measure rendered it powerless.

At some distance from the house, about the centre of the lawn, which was undulating, lay a hollow, shadowed by an ancient thorn, and covered with brushwood. "Could I reach it," thought Mrs. Waller, "and place the child there, and then run forward, Sir Egbert would continue his pursuit, and for myself I care not." So in the hope, she hastened forward, till she came near the hollow, when fondly kissing Herbert, who clung trembling like a dove to her bosom, she laid him within its shelter; but with screams he ran after her. There was no reasoning with such an infant. Again she stooped to raise him, and heard the maniac at her feet, his frantic yells intermingling with the howls of Bluff, as dragging his broken leg, the dog strove to follow. Onward she fled, loudly calling upon God for assistance. She saw the waters of the lake glitter; she fondly imagined that, could she reach it, and stand within its verge, perhaps Sir Herbert might hesitate to enter; but, alas! her strength was failing; her wearied limbs—her panting breath, could carry her no further; no—though five steps more had secured safety, she could not move. Again she called upon God; and, scarcely able to keep from falling, stood before the maniac, whose shouts of



their safest plan would be to cross over the lake.

With tears of gratitude Mrs. Waller largely rewarded the men, and pathetically described the danger of the child and her own sufferings, bitterly execrating the heartlessness of those gentlemen who had derided her fears; and as she knew that Sir Egbert would not easily be won from a fell purpose, upon the completion of which his distracted mind was bent—this tenacity of resolve being so frequently attendant on madness—she cast Herbert's cap and part of his torn dress on the waters, hoping they might lead to the supposition of his having perished, and found no difficulty in obtaining the men's promise of preserving an inviolable secrecy. They assured her with sincerity, that after the scene they had witnessed, they should consider an exposure of the innocent child to the maniac's revenge, as a murder committed by themselves. Next day, accompanied by Herbert and Bluff, she proceeded to Leeds, where she had a sister: there she took up her abode, passing off Herbert as her son, and no suspicion of the truth existed in the minds of the humble class with whom she resided. Unfortunately, her dread of affording any clue to the boy's escape was such, that she made no inquiries as to what was going forward at the Terrace, and thus



every artful means she insinuated herself into her confidence, until she at length persuaded her to remove to a cottage she possessed within less than a quarter of a mile of F——; observing that the belief of Herbert's death was so general, and so few beyond the establishment at the Terrace had ever seen him, that no suspicion would be entertained; independent of which, during the last nine months he had grown rapidly, and she advised that his existence should be kept secret until an opportunity offered of placing him under Mr. Aylsbury and Doctor Jerold's care, who possessed both power and wisdom to protect him; and as the latter had known him from infancy, and his features were remarkable in their perfection, there could be no doubt of his being at once identified. To Mrs. Waller's benighted mind this advice appeared reasonable, and she consented to adopt it; but ere quitting Leeds, she wrote all the particulars to Mr. Aylsbury and Doctor Jerold, intreating that they would lose no time in claiming Herbert, as her own health was rapidly fading. But to forward those letters did not suit Nelly; and being void of all honour or principle, she intercepted them. On removing to the cottage, so solicitous was she to retain her influence over Mrs. Waller, that she acted towards her as a servant; but no motive, moral or otherwise, was sufficient to

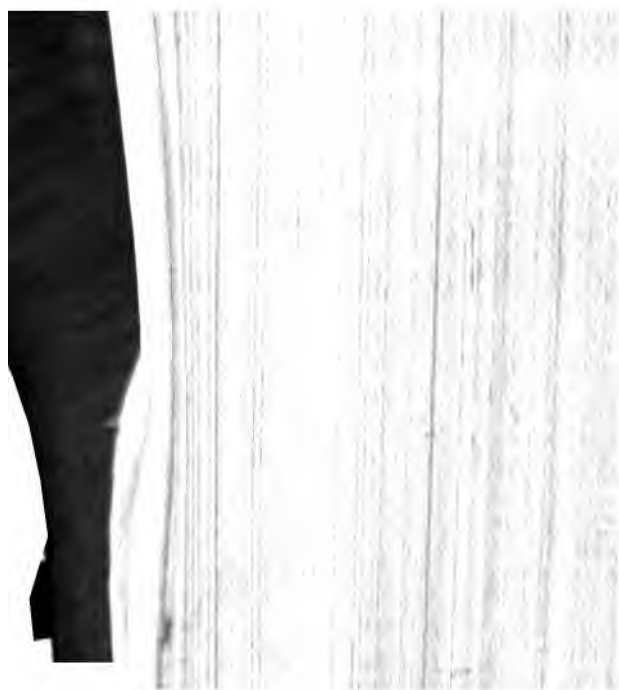
induce her to refrain from inebriety. At this time Herbert received every care; for, however altered in other respects, Mrs. Waller's attachment towards him, if possible, increased; and during the autumnal evenings, she would lead him towards Clara's solitary grave, giving him flowers to scatter over it, and speaking of her tenderness and the heaven to which she had been translated; and kneeling on the grave, she made him repeat his evening prayer. Thus his infant thoughts became associated with his mother's love and tenderness, and afterwards, whenever Nelly treated him with cruelty, he would steal to the cemetery, followed by his faithful dog.

During the commencement of the October previous to my finding Herbert, Mrs. Waller's sister arrived in F——, and shocked at her rapid decline, disgusted with Nelly's inebriety, and devoutly believing the child—about whom some mystery hung—was Nelly's spurious offspring, she insisted on Mrs. Waller, then scarcely conscious of passing events, accompanying her back to Leeds, promising, after a few days, to return for Herbert; but weakened from the journey, and regret at being separated from the child, Mrs. Waller expired the following week. No sooner did Nelly learn this, than packing up all the property she had left at the cottage, she

absconded to a miserable lodging on the other side of F——. What were her exact plans relative to Herbert none can now tell: probably she meant to send Doctor Jerold word of his being alive, and refuse to deliver him up without a large sum: but this is merely conjecture.

The people with whom Nelly now lodged, were of the lowest description, and, like herself, devoted to drunkenness; thus she no longer restricted her habits to the evenings. When sober, she was kind and attentive to Herbert, relative to whom, no inquiries were made; for the low set among whom he was thrown, believed Nelly to be his mother: but when intoxicated, her temper was violent and cruel, and she constantly beat him and Bluff, till they would fly from the house. Gradually, too, all his clothes were pledged, or otherwise disposed of; and the lovely boy, on whom the winds of heaven had not been permitted to blow too roughly, was half naked, and frequently fainting with hunger, of which he trembled to complain.

In December, Nelly was attacked by a slow fever. She strove to conquer it by deeper draughts of her prized gin, and the disease flew to her brain; then the little care she had occasionally paid to Herbert was lost; and as she had never permitted him to mix with other children, appre-



I continued at the hotel of F—— for six days, and then proceeded to London. It was my intention to call Herbert Lionel Deerhurst; and I resolved to alter my will, name him my heir, and appoint La Franck his guardian; and I concluded he would believe him to be my own son, as his likeness to me increased with years. From my early friendship with Aigline, and after intimacy, I thought it probable she might be suspected of being the boy's mother, and such, soon as my adoption became public, was the general belief.

While engaged in the execution of these plans, which again drew me back to life and its interests, I heard of Lord Beletrieve's death, by a chance, which, had it occurred to another, would have drawn forth his bitterest sarcasm. On the very morning but one previous to his Lordship's expected nuptials, he was found dead in his bed. Probably he had sufficient reflection to regret having become the tool of the Vilmonts, whom he always despised; and the vexation brought on another fit, which terminated their hopes. Abashed, disappointed, ridiculed, they hurried off to the Continent, regretted by none. After these events, I no longer shunned society; but its empty pageantry afforded no pleasure; and I resolved to proceed to the East with Herbert, whom I did not keep at the hotel,—as, while in England, I con-



I found no difficulty in persuading La Franck to accompany me to India. It had ever been his favourite wish to go there as a missionary, but he could not leave his aunt and sister. At this period he was very poor, and saw little prospect of promotion in the Church; so I allowed him a thousand a-year as tutor to Herbert, assuring him that his efforts to propagate Christianity in India should have my fullest assistance. By the commencement of July all was in preparation for our voyage. La Franck shed tears as he parted from many a valued friend; for me, I had none to regret—none who would regret me, or feel sorrow on my departure from Britain. So, on the twenty-second of the same month, in my well-appointed vessel, accompanied by Herbert, La Franck, Llewellyn, and a train of domestics, I sailed with a favourable wind for Pondicherry,—that haven towards which, during many a hard struggle, my father had looked as the land of promise; that proud home to which, in the dreams of an ill-regulated imagination, I had planned to bring Clara—then Aigline. Alas! for me, hope and love no longer existed.

* * * * *

My gorgeous palace and accumulated wealth far exceeded my expectations, and for the last eight years I have principally resided in Pondicherry,



fictitious name. Independent of this, I would remove from him the foul stigma of illegitimacy, and still more I owe it to Clara who fell an innocent victim to my crimes. It may be asked, why then have I so long postponed the explanation? I can offer no excuse, but the weak selfishness of my character which, with a morbid sensibility, shrank from exposing to a cold sneering world the frailties and sorrows which blighted my youth. The victories of war entwined my brow with laurels, the chances of a blind fortune heaped on me her treasures; and these distinctions exalted me in the opinion of an unreflecting multitude, ever influenced by outward show. Again, La Franck in the pursuit of his unpretending charities chose to impute to my liberality what in truth originated in his virtue, and all along the coast I am hailed as one devoting his time and means to the purposes of a christian philanthropy; and Herbert witnessing this, not only loves me with the affection of a child, but in the enthusiasm of his ardent nature, almost reverences me. Let me then enquire, is it easy to snap asunder the link which connects us, to draw the veil and stand before him not as an adored father, but as the wretch who, in pursuit of his unhallowed passion, drove his hapless parents to an untimely grave? Yet to this dreadful necessity I am now driven, and scarcely can the reli-



ties may tend to his future happiness time alone can tell; but under the judicious guidance of La Franck, I trust they may be directed to the noblest purposes, and with this prayer, Herbert, child of my adoption, farewell!

FREVILLE DEERHURST.

Palace of Pondicherry,
22d, 1823.

THE END.

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